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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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READERS' Q&A

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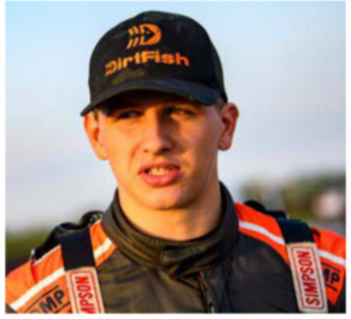
DirtFish
SIMPSON

McRae showed promise

By Graham Lister

Max McRae can become an even better driver following a challenging start to his European Rally Championship campaign in Poland last weekend.

Colin McRae's 18-year-old nephew finished sixth among the 16-strong Junior ERC entry after myriad delays in the Opel Corsa he drove for the first time in testing last Wednesday. A watching Alister McRae, Max's father, said: "The way you handle the difficult times obviously develops you as a driver as well. When he's not had problems his split times are almost there. Sure, he'll be a bit frustrated but he's learned a hell of a lot and that will put him in good stead for the next round in Latvia."

McRae clocked three top-two stage times and finished one place ahead of Aoife Raftery from Ireland. Meanwhile, Jon Armstrong won the ERC3 category for the third event running as British champion Osian Pryce made his European championship debut.

Full story, p9

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COMMENT

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Max McRae turned heads with his debut on the European Rally Championship trail

A NEW McRAE TO UPHOLD TRADITION

The spotlight was always going to be on Max McRae during his European Rally Championship debut season, and it was turned up again in Poland last weekend. The famous surname is bound to carry weight but, despite the lack of experience he has compared to those he was going up against in the Junior ERC division, his light shone brightly.

The 18-year-old set some stage-busting pace in his Opel Corsa and certainly left the right impression, despite being thwarted by some mechanical issues along the way. He drew praise from his title-winning father Alister. While it is pretty obvious that the old man is always going to be in Max's camp, the words of his father are not merely lip service. McRae Junior's speed made people take notice, and the great news is that the UK fans will get a chance to see the emerging star on British stages when he tackles the Jim Clark Rally this weekend. Then they will get to see that the fanfare is not all about hype, the prospects for another successful McRae are becoming very real indeed.

Elsewhere in this issue, we report on the latest rounds of the British Touring Car Championship from Snetterton. Ash Sutton was on fire again in his Motorbase Performance Ford Focus and has now vaulted to the head of the points table. His two wins in Norfolk, added to the two he took at Brands Hatch, mean that the 29-year-old has broken a 26-year-old record. He has become the first tin-top racer to win four BTCC rounds on the spin since Alain Menu in 1997 – a feat which is arguably much harder in the modern-day arena where there are so many performance-affecting factors in play. It is just another accolade which the Bishop's Stortford racer can add to his collection, and he is already looking like a nailed-on certainty for a record-equalling fourth crown, which would stand him among the greats such as Colin Turkington and Andy Rouse.

In the hot seat for the readers' questions this week is Rob Bell. The amiable Geordie was a leading light in single-seater racing in the late 1990s but hit the brick wall that is presented to so many up-and-coming drivers when the finances – which were never solid – eventually cried enough. But Bell is an intelligent racer and his abilities were soon put to good use in long-distance racing. As well as plying his trade at the cutting edge of long-distance sport, his analytical ability was spotted by McLaren and he has been part of the team that has kept customers of the British firm at the forefront of sportscar racing for such a long time. Bell is detailed and insightful in his answers and the interview begins on page 16.

Don't forget to reserve your next issue of Motorsport News. June starts a busy month for motorsport and it will, no doubt, be highlighted by the 100th anniversary of the first twice-around-the-clock Grand Prix d'Endurance de 24 Hours at Le Mans. Motorsport News will celebrate the special race with a look back at the history of the French classic in a special bumper issue. It will be one not to be missed.

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Photos: Motorsport Images

Rain meant F1 was axed last weekend

Imola's deal to host Formula 1 is likely to be expanded by one year

NO ROOM TO RESCHEDULE AXED EMILIA ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX AFTER FLOODING CAUSES CANCELLATION

Tragedy in the Italian region leads to F1 bosses calling off sixth round of the season

By James Roberts

This year's Formula 1 schedule is set to drop to 22 races following the cancellation of last weekend's race in Imola due to severe flooding.

With such a congested calendar, F1 bosses were unable to find a free weekend to reschedule the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix in 2023 so the event is likely to be given an extra year on top of its current contract and will host a race in 2026.

Circuit bosses have begun the process of refunding ticket holders after the decision was made to call off the event four days before the race was due to start. Crews setting up the paddock were told to evacuate the track last Tuesday afternoon as water levels from the Santerno river behind the pits were beginning to rise to dangerous levels.

The circuit was subsequently off-limits on Wednesday as aerial footage showed the support paddock flooded.

Torrential rain and landslides in the region around Bologna have taken a number of lives and emergency services have been evacuating communities affected. Members of the Alpine team were forced to move hotels after water levels rose in the area they were staying, while F1 personnel flew in – only to be immediately re-routed back to the UK. Crews were allowed back into the track on Thursday to start disassembly and to move cars and equipment to Monaco for this weekend's race. Ferrari has donated one million euros (£870k) to the relief effort– a donation matched by the Formula 1 organisation itself –and footage showed Yuki Tsunoda, who drives for the neighbouring Faenza-based AlphaTauri team, helping with the clear-up operation.

"After a horrible night the town is heavily impacted: mud and the smell of gasoline everywhere," said Tsunoda. "People are struggling to find food and places to stay. Many have been evacuated from their homes."

The devastating scenes were particularly upsetting for Formula 1 CEO Stefano Domenicali. Since being put in charge of F1 he has been instrumental in having Imola back on the calendar. Under the title of the San Marino GP, the race was a mainstay on the schedule between 1980 and 2006, and returned in 2020 as the Emilia Romagna GP.

Domenicali grew up in the region and as a youngster volunteered as a marshal in the Imola car park. "It is such a tragedy to see what has happened to Imola and Emilia Romagna, the town and region that I grew up in, and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the flooding and the families and communities affected," said Domenicali.

No decision has yet been made on rescheduling the F2 and F3 races, which will be in action again at this coming weekend's Monaco Grand Prix.

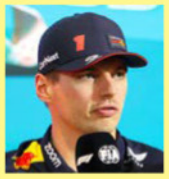
F1's Domenicali feels the pain

WHAT THEY SAID

"Hope everyone in Emilia Romagna is able to stay safe and look out for each other. Thoughts are with those affected by this tragedy and the amazing emergency services working on the ground."
Lewis Hamilton

"Sorry for the fans that this weekend's race has been cancelled but the safety of everyone involved always has to come first."
George Russell

"I love racing, but the safety of everyone else is more important. Sorry to all the fans, we'll be back Imola – stay safe."
Lando Norris



"Thoughts are with all those affected by the severe rainfall and flooding in the greater Emilia Romagna region. [I] wish you all strength to ensure your safety throughout this period."
Max Verstappen

FORMULA 1'S CANCEL CULTURE

1 Australia 2020

Formula 1 arrived in Melbourne for the start of the 2020 season, but the event was cancelled just hours before practice was due to begin because of the coronavirus pandemic. The night before FP1, McLaren had withdrawn from the event as one of its team members had tested positive for Covid. In a week of dramatic escalation, where borders were being closed and flights grounded, F1 stopped racing for four months.

2 Bahrain 2011

The Arab Spring civil uprisings spread to Bahrain in February 2011 posing a direct threat to the kingdom's grand prix which is closely linked to the Bahraini ruling family. The race was due to start the season in March and was initially postponed three weeks while talks were held with human rights groups. Former F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone hoped to run the race later in the season, but it was eventually canned until the following year.

3 Belgium 1985

A decision to resurface the bumpy Spa-Francorchamps track was delayed due to a cold winter and took place two weeks before the race's June date. As soon as practice began the asphalt started to tear up and holes appeared around the course. On Saturday morning, cars were 23 seconds slower than the previous day as more damage occurred to the surface. All running was suspended and the race was eventually held in September that year.

4 Belgium and Netherlands 1957

War in Egypt in late 1956, known as the Suez Crisis, led to economic uncertainty and petrol rationing. Two rounds of the 1957 season at Spa and Zandvoort were cancelled at the last minute as both sets of organisers asked teams to accept reduced appearances fees — and either was rebuffed. The sporting department of the FIA found a replacement: the now legendary one-off road race around Pescara.

AlphaTauri boss to step down

FERRARI MAN TO TAKE THE REINS AT ALPHATAURI

Ferrari's sporting director Laurent Mekies has been lined up to replace Franz Tost as the head of the AlphaTauri Formula 1 team as the latter has decided to stand down.

Tost announced at the end of April he was going to step aside from the Red Bull-backed team. The 67-year-old, who began his career at Williams, has been at the helm since 2005.

Tost said: "It was my decision and started already two years ago. [I] discussed it already with [the late Red Bull boss] Dietrich Mateschitz in those days, because I am 67 years old and when I was younger I always said to myself: 'If you're in a leading position, you should not glue on the seat, then you should give this position to younger people, more clever people, creative people'.

"And now that I am going into [my] 70s its time to say goodbye; I love Formula 1… but it's a story that has to end and especially now with the solution of Peter Bayer as [incoming] CEO and Laurent Mekies [who began his career with AlphaTauri when it was known as Toro Rosso] we have two fantastic people who will replace me. I think it's the best time to go out from Formula 1."

Circuit interest from Bottas

BOTTAS INVESTIGATES FINNISH CIRCUIT PLAN

Alfa Romeo grand prix driver Valtteri Bottas has held talks about rescuing a plan for an international circuit in his native Finland after the scheme hit financial trouble.

The KymiRing, in the south of the country, was ready in 2019 to hold test sessions for MotoGP machines, but the global health pandemic scuppered those plans, and the war in Ukraine then caused further delays. The track bosses have since gone into administration.

Bottas, however, is reported to have held talks with track chiefs to see if there is a way of bring the project to life again.

The 10-time grand prix winner said: "I would love to see a proper track in Finland, a proper international level of track.

"But the thing is that the track company is now bankrupt. So it's going to be not an easy way from that. Finland, as a location with a decent winter, which means at least no driving in the winter. I'll see if there's any opportunities."

PALOU TO START THE INDY 500 FROM POLE POSITION

Champion banks the prime slot for iconic IndyCar showdown

Photos: Motorsport Images

Palou has got Indy 500 pole

By Matt James

Alex Palou set a record-breaking pace on the qualifying day for this weekend's Indy 500 with an average speed over his four-lap run of more than 234mph.

The Chip Ganassi driver headed five other drivers in the final shootout for top slot ahead of the 107th running of the 500-mile race, which takes place on Sunday.

The 2021 IndyCar title winner will line up ahead of the Ed Carpenter car of Renus VeeKay and Swede Felix Rosenqvist in his McLaren-run machine. Rosenqvist had topped the times in the earlier running but missed out on his four-lap session.

Twenty-six-year-old Spaniard Palou said: "It means the world to me, we knew it was going to be tight, they gave the fastest car to me. Watching [the other drivers] was tougher than doing the four laps.

"The car was great, the balance was great and I knew it was going to be a good time. It was sliding a bit but there were no big moments.

"I didn't see my first lap time because I was busy on the radio and pushing lots of buttons, but when I saw my second lap I knew it was about to be a good run. I was tense but I kept focusing on the next corner and the next corner."

Spaniard had 234mph average

STARTING GRID

Indy 500

P	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Alex Palou	Chip Ganassi Racing
2	Renus VeeKay	Ed Carpenter Racing
3	Felix Rosenqvist	Arrow McLaren
4	Santino Ferrucci	AJ Foyt Racing
5	Pato O'Ward	Arrow McLaren
6	Scott Dixon	Chip Ganassi Racing
7	Alexander Rossi	Arrow McLaren
8	Takuma Sato	Chip Ganassi Racing
9	Tony Kanaan	Arrow McLaren
10	Marcus Ericsson	Chip Ganassi Racing

Palou is on top of the points table heading to the Indy 500, while McLaren's Pato O'Ward, who is second in the standings, will line up fifth in Indiana.

Briton Stefan Wilson will line up in 25th spot in his Dreyer and Reinbold-Cusick Motorsports Dallara after a 231.648mph run. Callum Ilott (231.182mph) is 28th in his Juncos Hollinger machine, while Katherine Legge is 30th for Rahal Letterman Lanigan as she clocked 231.070mph. Her team-mate, Jack Harvey, left it late to earn his entry into the race in 33rd and last spot with a 229.166mph outing.

VASSEUR EFFECT ABOUT TO TAKE HOLD AT FERRARI, SAYS LECLERC

Ferrari Formula 1 star Charles Leclerc says that new boss Frederic Vasseur is now ready to implement changes to the Scuderia as it aims to return to the front of the grand prix pack.

Former Alfa Romeo man Vasseur took the reins at the Italian team earlier this year after the departure of Mattia Binotto following a disappointing run in 2022. Ferrari has struggled against Red Bull this season and has only notched one podium this term when Leclerc finished third in Azerbaijan.

Despite this, Leclerc believes Vasseur will head up a positive period of change for the squad now that he has had time to assess the team over the opening part of 2023. There are a number of staff changes at the head of the team, including the departure of the head of vehicle concept, David Sanchez, to McLaren.

Asked if Vasseur was having a positive effect in the squad, Leclerc said: "I think he's just starting this process now. Until now, he was basically trying to analyse the situation as quickly as possible in order to do the best changes possible for the future.

"I think the big part of the job will be done from now on. So we will see. Obviously, I speak a lot with Fred and I know what his middle- and long-term plans for the team are. I'm completely behind him and I trust him fully.

"I'm sure these are the right choices and it goes in the right direction for the team. I'm looking forward to it."

Ferrari: ready to move ahead

Kimi Raikkonen drove the Trackhouse 91 Chevy earlier this season

VAN GISBERGEN LINES UP NASCAR OUTING IN CHICAGO

Kiwi racer Shane van Gisbergen will make his NASCAR debut on a street course in Chicago in early July for the Trackhouse 91 team that has previously run cars for Kimi Raikkonen.

The three-time Australian Supercars champion will visit the team at the race in Nashville ahead of his competition debut at the Illinois race on the 2.14-mile track on July 2. He will handle the car that has been used to encourage international participation in the category. Raikkonen finished 29th in the machine in a one-off outing at the Circuit of the Americas in the Chevrolet Camaro in late March.

"I can honestly say I have dreamed about an opportunity in NASCAR, but really never thought it would become a reality," said van Gisbergen. "I can't wait to get to the States to meet everyone and prepare for Chicago.

"It's NASCAR's first time on the streets of Chicago so in some ways everyone will be a rookie like me, but I don't underestimate that it's going to be a huge challenge."

Van Gisbergen is fourth in the chase for this season's Australian Supercars crown driving a Triple Eight Racing-run Chevrolet Camaro.

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Team switches focus to Europe

The all-disabled team's British GT high point was third overall at Spa

TEAM BRIT MAKES McLAREN TROPHY SWITCH

All-disabled team departs British GT for new European-wide all-McLaren contest

By Graham Keilloh

Team Brit has quit the British GT championship to race instead in the new single-make European-wide McLaren Trophy contest.

The team, which aims to be the first all-disabled squad to compete at Le Mans, joined British GT at the start of last season with its McLaren 570S GT4 and took a best result of third overall at Spa last year.

The team and its driver pairing Bobby Trundley and Aaron Morgan will for the rest of 2023 race in the GT World Challenge Europe-supporting McLaren Trophy championship, which has its inaugural round at Paul Ricard early next month.

Team Brit was forced to reconsider its 2023 plans after its 570S was heavily damaged in the recent British GT Silverstone 500 round, when it was T-boned by Simon Orange's McLaren 720S GT3.

Also the team has been driving the only 570S in British GT this year, with all other GT4 McLaren entries driving the new Artura, and the McLaren Trophy has distinct categories for the 570S and Artura. Team Brit may still however make a British GT appearance later this season.

Team Brit founder Dave Player said: "We want to give [Trundley and Morgan] the best possible platform from which to continue to develop and grow as drivers and, for many reasons, the British GT championship does not provide that for us this year.

"Our experience with British GT has been nothing but positive. The McLaren Trophy will offer huge opportunities. It will be fantastic to demonstrate our huge progress in disability racing."

JUNIOR DOUGLASS MAKES FOX SWITCH

Ginetta Junior racer Mckenzie Douglass has switched from Elite Motorsport to Fox Motorsport for the remainder of this year's championship

The Welsh 16-year-old joins Harry Moss and Holly Miall in Fox's expanded three-car line-up, starting this weekend at Donington Park.

Douglass sits ninth in this year's standings after the opening two rounds. He finished 12th overall, and was fifth of the rookie drivers, with Elite Motorsport in his 2022 Ginetta Junior debut season.

Douglass said: "Clearly [Fox is] one of the best teams in Ginetta Juniors, which they've proven with Liam [McNeilly] over the past two years, and that they have a team in GB4 and have been competing in GTs until last season shows that they know how to help drivers progress and have actively put a system in place to encourage this.

"The aim is to get on the overall podium and win races this year towards my goal of becoming a professional sportscar racer."

Brea Angliss has also switched teams for this weekend's Ginetta Junior round, joining Breakell Racing from Alastair Rushforth Motorsport for the remainder of her full car-racing debut season.

The 15-year-old racer said: "It's not the easiest decision to move teams during a season, but after some frustrations over the opening two events, we feel it's the best way forward.

"Breakell Racing have enjoyed some great results with Ginetta in recent years so I'm confident they'll give me a quick race car."

Optimum is latest British squad to try new McLaren contest

OPTIMUM JOINS MCLAREN LINE-UP

Multiple GT championship-winner Optimum Motorsport has added the all-new McLaren Trophy to its 2023 itinerary with ex-factory driver Joe Osborne partnering Am driver Jay Palmer in an Artura GT4.

Optimum races in British GT with entries in GT3 and GT4 – winning Silverstone's recent GT4 race with its Artura – and also has efforts this season in IMSA, GT World Challenge Europe and International GT Open. Osborne is a multiple British GT race winner and its television commentator, and a long-time racer with Optimum across several GT categories.

Team principal Shaun Goff said: "It's a very exciting [series] for not just us as a team, but also for McLaren. To be able to host a brand-new one-make series just goes to show how much interest there is in the car.

"Jay, Joe, and the team have clocked up the miles since testing began at the start of the year and we're confident with the car."

Optimum's effort is on a 17-car, 33-driver, provisional McLaren Trophy entry list unveiled ahead of its inaugural Paul Ricard double-header on June 2-4. The entry includes five Greystone GT McLarens, a Race Lab Artura that includes reigning GT Cup champion Michael O'Brien in its line-up, plus a 7TSIX entry.

The Pro-Am championship designed to place emphasis on the Am driver, who will take on qualifying duties.

MGF CUP TRIBUTE

Mark Wright and fellow MGF Cup car enthusiast Steve Elliott hope to mark the championship's 25th anniversary by gathering cars at next month's MG Car Club Silverstone Grand Prix event.

The popular British Racing Drivers' Club championship ran from 1998 to 2000 and supported the British Grand Prix in 1998 and '99 and British Formula 3 and British GT meetings.

Wright at Oulton Park 10 days ago in MGCC's Cockshoot Cup season opener raced the car in which Warren Hughes won 1999's MGF Cup championship and James Rhodes took the inaugural 1998 crown. Wright and engineer Elliott have restored the car to its '99 spec.

Elliott told Motorsport News: "We got into them through Wrighty saying how good they were to race. Everything on the car is absolutely as it was in '99, and it's still pretty competitive. It's just a very very pretty car. [It was] super successful, the kind of MGF Cup car to have if you're going to have one."

Wright and Dave Coyne raced the car last year – Wright twice finished second at Donington Park – and they will both race MGFs at Silverstone.

"We're going to see if we can get half a dozen genuine cars together as a bit of a display, and race them," Elliott added. "They only made 30 and some got crashed, and then the good bits got pinched off a fair few of them."

Car that took Warren Hughes to MGF Cup title got Oulton runout

RACING NEWS

BMW CONTEST'S CARD TRIBUTE

BMW Racing Drivers Club Championship will hold the inaugural Rodger Card Memorial Race at Castle Combe next month paying tribute to the popular long-standing BMW racer, club servant and member.

Card raced in the championship alongside his son James from the early 2000s until Rodger's death from cancer in 2015. James continues to race in the contest and is a twice overall champion, including taking last year's title.

Also at the Saturday, June 10 Combe event a minimum prize fund of £1000 spread throughout the classes is up for grabs, and the 'Invitation Class' will be open to virtually any BMW at the BMWRDC's discretion with a free choice of tyres and gearboxes. Club bosses hope the memorial race will become an annual event.

Club press officer Mike Gibbon said: "Rodger epitomised everything good about grassroots motorsport and life in general. He was a fiercely competitive but very fair driver on track, but always ready to give anyone a helping hand when not racing.

"To paraphrase a comment made to the huge crowd at his funeral, 'Rodger lived his live by his own set of rules and was greatly admired by all who knew him'."

Card is remembered

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

HACK ATTACK
P1
P1
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Returning Hack Sr and new racer Hack Jr were hard to separate

Snetterton
snetterton.co.uk

Both Hacks got victories

CHAMP HACK LEADS FATHER-AND-SON 1-2

Three-time Mini Miglia champion on comeback trail in Mini 7S class at Snetterton heads home Mini 7 Club's first father-and-son 1-2

By Graham Keilloh

Multiple Mini Miglia champion Andrew Hack led home a Mini 7S class 1-2 ahead of son Frazer at Snetterton 10 days ago, Mini 7 Club's first-ever father-son 1-2.

Hack Sr, approaching his 60th birthday, is fresh into his first Mini racing since in 2009 completing three back-to-back titles. He subsequently competed in historic and endurance racing, before stopping after a big Barcelona accident in 2017. Hack Jr meanwhile started racing in 2021. In Snetterton's opener Andrew pipped Frazer by just 0.3 seconds. Frazer won race two.

Hack Sr told Motorsport News: "[In my big accident] I bruised the front and rear of my brain, the car rolled, it pulled 11 lateral *g* – you pass out at 7*g*. So that curtailed my motor racing for a bit.

"And the boy, who's lived his life travelling around race circuits, never showed any interest in motorsport until two years ago. We bought a little Mini 7S class [for him to race].

"He's never raced before, never done karting, bugger me goes out at Brands Hatch, wins the first race.

"And I bought a little car as a spare car and thought let's have a little go together. I rallied in the late '90s with my father, and we won the Historic Rally championship. I can now appreciate how it was great for my dad.

"Managing to get a 1-2, I was absolutely over the moon. I can give up racing now!"

Both intend to complete the season, and to share a historic Mini. Frazer's ambition is to race a historic MGB.

BrandsHatch

Resurfacing has taken place on Brands GP loop among other works

BRANDS HATCH HAS A SPRING SPRUCE UP

Brands Hatch underwent a series of improvement works last week including extensive resurfacing and kerb replacement ahead of its summer schedule.

Resurfacing was carried out in several areas, including the pitlane entry and on the Grand Prix loop from Surtees through Pilgrims Drop through to Hawthorn Bend.

Replacement kerbs were also installed, notably at McLaren, while the Druids gravel trap was replenished.

There have also been detail changes including a repainted pitwall, with some renewed brickwork, and several pitwall speakers replaced.

Brands Hatch circuit manager Mike Lally said: "We're always looking carefully at how we can improve Brands Hatch as a venue, and we've had a perfect window following the GT World Challenge event to make some changes to the on-circuit and pit infrastructure.

"The resurfacing work on the Grand Prix circuit means that much of the famous longer layout has been replenished in the past 18 months, whilst other projects will ensure the circuit is in excellent shape for the summer months, for the benefit of all participants."

SARGEANT SET FOR TCR UK BOW

Luke Sargeant will make his TCR UK debut at Oulton Park next month stepping up from its Civic Cup feeder contest in his freshman car-racing season.

Sargeant in Cheshire on Saturday, June 10 will race the Area Motorsport-run Hyundai Elantra N TCR that was driven by Josh Files in the Snetterton double-header TCR UK season opener.

The Elantra showed good pace on its championship debut at Snetterton, Files taking pole position and a second-place finish. The car has since been fitted with a new engine and turbo and will be back to compete alongside the latest generation of TCR models. Sargeant will have several test days ahead of his Oulton bow.

Sargeant said: "When I decided I wanted to go racing, my first thought was that I wanted to be in TCR UK and next month I get the chance to realise that ambition. As I join the grid in my first season of car racing, I know that there is a competitive field this year, and I'm looking forward to a solid debut which will kick off my programme for 2023."

MAXIMUM NETWORKS
WWW.RS-VEHICLESALES.CO.UK

Sergeant to realise TCR ambition

MINI CHAMPION WELLER BACK

Reigning Mini Challenge champion Sam Weller returned to the contest last weekend with his Hybrid Tune team in his home Snetterton event supporting the British Touring Car Championship.

Weller returns

Weller with Hybrid Tune secured last year's title with four wins and twelve podiums from 20 starts, never finishing lower than sixth. So far in 2023 Weller has performed a Hybrid Tune coaching role.

The 31-year-old lined up alongside Will Orton and Joe Tanner in a slimmed-down three-car entry, with Ryan Faulconbridge not racing and Sam Smith recovering from his Donington Park accident. Weller was not eligible to score points as a guest entry.

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, FIAERC.com

DETERMINED McRAE DELIVERS WITH RAPID TIMES ON EUROPEAN DEBUT

Watching father Alister praises son following trouble-filled first international rally

By Graham Lister

Max McRae emerged from the opening round of the Junior ERC Championship as a title contender after he completed Rally Poland with a brace of top-two stage times.

He was second quickest on Friday night's opening superspecial but slipped back on Saturday afternoon due to an electrical issue, having dropped 10 seconds with an overshoot on SS2.

With the ECU-related problem also apparent on leg two, the 18-year-old lost further time when his Opel Corsa bogged down in deep ruts at the start of Sunday's first test, costing some four minutes.

He eventually finished in sixth position out of 16 starters after going second quickest on the rally-deciding Powerstage, a mere 1.3s behind category winner Ola Nore.

McRae's father Alister was in Mikolajki to support his son during his first international event.

He said: "The fact it's been such a tough weekend and not his fault he's handled it way better than I thought and the times he's setting are very good when the car's not cutting out.

"He only did two runs of the test stage and two runs of shakedown so he had no experience with the car. We changed it at lunchtime yesterday, he was happy in the afternoon but then the electrical issue got worse and wouldn't start on the first stage [that morning]. It's been a tricky rally, everything is new but he's handled it very well."

Hankook
driving emotion
ERC
DirtFish

McRae put in a very strong performance

Max McRae, who is Jimmy McRae's grandson and the late Colin McRae's nephew, said: "It's good to be here after the last stage and it definitely wasn't an easy rally either. To finish off with two top-three times after a troubled weekend, that's really good and it's good to end on a high. Apart from the troubles we've had it's been a good experience and we've learned a lot. We've taken full advantage of this rally and taken the maximum out of it in terms of experience. Hopefully we can capitalise on that that in Liepaja."

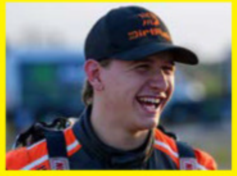
Liepaja in Latvia hosts the second Junior ERC event from June 16-18. Like Poland, it's also a high-speed gravel rally, albeit faster.

ALISTER McRAE: SET-UP DECISIONS DOWN TO MAX

Alister McRae has given a brief insight into the role he's performing in support of his son Max during his rookie Junior ERC season.

The British champion and World championship regular travelled from his home in Western Australia to follow Max on Rally Poland last week.

"He speaks to me more about the car set-up and what the car's doing," said 52-year-old. "I try to fast-track the learning knowledge like what the damper changes do, what the roll bar changes do, basically trying to assist him with that, giving him ideas to think about then he makes a decision."



Max leads direction

Max McRae was one of 16 Junior ERC drivers competing Poland and the level of competition in the category for Hankook-equipped Rally4 and Rally5 cars for drivers under 27 impressed his father.

"I thought it would be competitive but I didn't think it would be like this," said Alister McRae. "It's going to be a seriously competitive championship right through the year. But Max will learn and build his experience throughout the year.

"Sure he'll be a bit frustrated but he's learned a hell of a lot and that will put him in good stead for the next round in Latvia."

Portugal has a new deal

PORTUGAL'S WRC TENURE EXTENDED

Portugal has got at least one more season in the World Rally Championship following a deal between organiser Automóvel Club de Portugal and WRC Promoter.

The event is guaranteed a slot on the 2024 calendar with an option to extend the contract into 2025.

"The signing of this contract demonstrates the confidence that WRC Promoter has in the organisation and is recognition of the effort we have made to organise one of the signature rallies on the World championship calendar," said ACP chief Carlos Barbosa.

WRC Promoter boss Jona Siebel said: "In the ACP we have a strong partner, and we now begin working on planning with them for 2024."

An estimated 300,000 fans followed this year's Rally of Portugal.

Pryce said that he learned some important lessons on Rally Poland

BEST IS YET TO COME RECKONS BRITISH CHAMPION PRYCE

Osian Pryce is convinced he can show more pace when the European Rally Championship resumes in Latvia next month.

The British champion, who hadn't competed since last October, was 16th on his ERC debut in Poland last weekend, his first competitive outing in a Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo and his first alongside new co-driver Stephane Prevot. "We made some progress and learned a lot," said the 30-year-old Welshman. "With a bit of time I think it will come and I'm happy enough with how it's gone. There's a lot of analysing to do now but I've got a bit of an idea about Latvia."

Pryce's Rally Poland outing was the first of three high-speed ERC gravel events in a row.

"As soon as it clicks I know I can drive better but I have to accept I've been out of a car for a long time," Pryce said. "I'm making the most of the opportunity and I'm very lucky to be here. I could easily be at home thinking about doing it but we're here, we're learning and we're progressing."

PORTUGAL THE PRIORITY FOR COMEBACK MAN MEEKE

Kris Meeke's return to the World Rally Championship in Portugal earlier this month is likely to be a one-off.

The Northern Irishman was competing on the gravel event as part of the Portuguese championship, which he's contesting for the country's Hyundai importer in place of Craig Breen, who lost his life in a testing accident last month.

"It was nice to come back [to the WRC]," said the 43-year-old. "I have some great memories. It's obviously difficult to be here under the circumstances but the opportunity presented itself and I am here because I wanted to drive. But I am driving for Hyundai Portugal and the Portuguese championship [is the priority]."

Meeke revealed he initially turned down the offer to replace Breen in the Team Hyundai Portugal i20 N Rally2.

"It was so soon after everything happened," he said. "When the opportunity presented itself, I declined the offer. I thought it was too soon. But, after a few days, we talked again and I talked to Craig's family and, for me, it's a pleasure to be back in a rally car."

Meeke won Rali Terras d'Aboboreira on his Portuguese championship debut in late April but retired on Rally of Portugal with suspension failure.

After four rounds on gravel, the Portuguese championship switches to Tarmac for the final four events of the season. Rali de Castelo Branco is next on the calendar from June 30-July 1.

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Hyundai

Meeke, here on Rally of Portugal, will concentrate on the domestic contest

BLACK CHASES BRC AND PROTYRE POINTS ON JIM CLARK AFTER MANX WIN

Ford Fiesta Rally2 man to take on the British contest's best on closed-road rally

Photos: Ben Lawrence, Motorsport Images

Black came out on top on Manx Rally

By Paul Lawrence

Leading British rally contender Callum Black will head into this weekend's Jim Clark Rally on a high after an emphatic victory on the Manx Rally.

The Jim Clark, which runs on closed roads near the Scottish ace's hometown of Duns, is round two of the British Rally Championship and round four of the Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship.

Black and his co-driver Jack Morton are currently contesting both championships in their Ford Fiesta Rally2 and a strong result will earn them big points in each championship.

The Manx was Black's first major asphalt event for eight years and his first driving the four-wheel-drive Fiesta Rally2 on sealed surfaces. He quickly found the leading pace and will aim to carry that pace into the Jim Clark.

Black told MN: "We just had to get a decent pace, but not too fast. I loved it. It was really good fun and I loved being back on Tarmac."

In BRC terms, Black will go up against M-Sport's WRC2 driver Adrien Fourmaux, who won the season opener on the Malcolm Wilson Rally, and BRC champion Keith Cronin who finished second in the Lake District snow and ice. It will be Fourmaux's first taste of the fast Scottish lanes.

In the Protyre stakes, Neil Roskell (Fiesta Rally2) heads the standings going into the Jim Clark from William Hill (Fiesta Rally3) and Dave Wright (Fiesta R5). After missing the season opener, Black is currently fourth and will face a tough decision after the Jim Clark.

Black said: "The following round for the Protyre is Argyll, which clashes with the BRC in Ypres. Depending on how the Jim Clark goes, we'll have a look at it and make a call after that on which event we do."

McRAE TAKES FAMILY NAME BACK TO THE JIM CLARK RALLY

Max McRae will contest this weekend's Jim Clark rally in the Opel Corsa Rally4 that he has been using in the European Rally Championship.

Fresh from tackling last weekend's Rally Poland in the Racing Factory Opel, McRae and co-driver Mac Kierans will switch to asphalt for the Scottish Borders rally.

McRae, who will be 19 in June, is the youngest member of the McRae rallying dynasty and will be competing on the famous Scottish event for the first time.

McRae said: "Like you can imagine, the Jim Clark Rally is an event every Scottish driver wants to compete on – Jim Clark is one of the biggest names in motorsport.

"And the rally in his name is a really interesting one.

"The event has a great history and is a very big challenge. The chance to do the Jim Clark is going to give us a really useful test for the asphalt rounds of the ERC which lie ahead. But as well as that, competing on the Jim Clark Rally is something really nice for the family here in Scotland. I'm sure it'll be a great weekend."

Max McRae will take on the Jim Clark challenge

THE MIGHTY QUINN MASTERS THE MANX

Mick Quinn and novice co-driver Mike Percival were elated with their Manx Rally result after finishing 50th overall in their Renault Clio on a first attempt at the tough event.

The Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship contenders started as car 99 and avoided the accidents and mechanical woe all around them. The Manx was Quinn's toughest asphalt rally since switching from gravel events two years ago.

"If someone had said I would finish 50th on my first time on the Manx Rally as a competitor and with a complete novice navigator, I would not have believed them," said Yorkshireman Quinn after the rally.

"I knew I needed to bring the car home in one piece with the Jim Clark Rally less than two weeks away, so I'm well pleased with this result."

Quinn: thrilled with results

Cole has faced a rapid repair to return for Jim Clark Rally

COLE'S RACE AGAINST TIME TO REPAIR DIFF FOR JIM CLARK

Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship contender Brad Cole faced a race against time to get his Ford Escort Mk2 ready for this weekend's Jim Clark Rally.

Cole's 2.5-litre Escort suffered a major diff failure on the Manx Rally and the Somerset-based driver had barely a week to get it repaired for the Jim Clark where he will again be one of the leading two-wheel-driver contenders in the Protyre series.

Cole told MN: "Because of our location down in Somerset, we have to travel up on Wednesday to the Jim Clark. So we'd only got a full week really. The axle came out as soon as we got home. We dropped two scores on the Manx so we need to score on the Jim Clark."

He has regular co-driver Jamie Vaughan back this weekend after Neil Colman stood in for the Manx while Vaughan was away with his WRC TV commitments.

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RALLY NEWS

CHEVIOT RALLY CANCELLED DUE TO OTTERBURN MILITARY TRAINING

The Cheviot Stages rally on Otterburn planned for Sunday, October 22, has been cancelled due to military use of the Northumberland ranges.

The event was due to be the final round of the Motorsport News-supported Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship but following the recent cancellation of the Tyneside Stages on Otterburn, the organisers of the Cheviot have now had to call time on this year's event.

In a statement, the Whickham and Hadrian Clubs said: "Demand for use of the Otterburn Training Estate is extremely high this year, and we have been advised that large numbers of military bookings have been taken. This has led to our request to use the ranges on our scheduled weekend to be withdrawn."

Frustratingly, the organisers had made good progress in talks with tenant farmers and had secured the use of parts of the ranges not used for many years.

Paul Morris, co-ordinator of the Asphalt Rally series, is now consulting with other parties regarding the championship calendar, which could end as early as Rali Ceredigion on September 2-3 if no replacement is possible for the Cheviot.

Roskell leads the points

Photos: Ben Lawrence

Hunter will consider his future after his accident

HUNTER PONDERS RALLYING RETURN WHILE RECOVERING FROM RECENT MANX SHUNT

Ford Fiesta Rally2 racer thinks again after sizeable crash on the Isle of Man

By Paul Lawrence

Hugh Hunter says he will think about his rallying future as he recuperates from a high-speed accident on the recent Manx Rally.

Hunter and co-driver Rob Fagg were among the pacesetters on the Isle of Man event in their Ford Fiesta Rally2 until the crash early in the final stage at Druidale. The car got out of sequence over a series of uphill jumps and hit the bank on the left before spinning across the road and into the trees on the right-hand side.

Hunter suffered a compression fracture to a disk and bruised lungs and spent two nights in hospital on the island before returning home to North Wales.

Fagg, who lives on the island about five miles from the scene of the accident, was largely unscathed.

Hunter told MN: "The car is not as bad as we first thought and is fixable. As for a return, well, we'll see. I've got a bit of thinking to do on it over the next few months. I still love the sport so much so I'd find it really difficult to walk away."

Both crew members paid tribute to the actions of competitors Wayne Sisson and Peredur Davies who were in the first car on the scene. They later received the 'spirit of the rally' award for their actions in looking after the crew and arranging for medical and rescue support, which was on hand very quickly.

"I want to thank Wayne and Ped and all the recovery crews and medical staff at the scene and at Douglas Hospital," said Hunter, who has been rallying for more than 30 years and won the corresponding rally in 2017.

NO MANX LUCK FOR EXPECTANT DAD PIERCE

Matt Pierce and Jez Rogers had a disastrous Manx Rally before Pierce dashed home for the due arrival of his third child.

It was the first rally since the Isle of Man last September for Pierce in his modified Ford Escort Mk2 and had a fresh two-litre Vauxhall engine for the weekend. Unfortunately the engine blew on the second stage of the rally and they were out.

Pierce tackled the event knowing that his third child, a girl, was due to be delivered on the Monday after the rally.

"My wife Lisa is very understanding and I've done very well to get away. It's all been organised for a while," he added.

There are no immediate plans for the next event for the Oswestry driver, but the Three Shires Stages in September is a likely target.

Pierce had a short run

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

HERO CHALLENGE ONE GOES TO AYRIS AND BANNISTER IN MGB ROADSTER WITH ACE PERFORMANCE

Simon Ayris and Kim Bannister took a convincing win on the first round of the three-event HERO Challenge series.

The Amesbury-based event consisted of six regularity sections and eight tests. All the tests were at the Bovington Tank Training Ground. Class improvement scoring was used for these, with the fastest in each class scoring zero penalties.

Ayris/Bannister, competing in an MGB Roadster, were quickest in Class 5 on all tests, which made up the middle section of the rally; they went into Test 1 in sixth place and emerged with a lead that they were to maintain to the finish.

Duncan Wild and Steve Skepper led after two regularities, but a broken driveshaft on their Mini, which was repaired, caused them to miss out all of the tests. There was a fierce battle for the runner-up spot, with Chris Chapman/David Broome swapping the place with James Holt/Archie Holt several times. At the finish Chapman/Broome were a second in front.

David and Ed Liddell had been in second place at the lunch halt and maintained this position until the penultimate regularity where they lost a minute; in the fiercely competitive event this error meant that they fell to 18th place at the finish.

Ian Mills

Results

HERO Challenge One

Organiser: HERO-ERA **When:** May 13 **Where:** Wiltshire and Dorset **Championships:** HERO Challenge **Route:** 156 miles **Starters:** 72.

1 Simon Ayris/Kim Bannister (MGB Roadster) 31s; 2 Chris Chapman/David Broome (BMW 323) +13s; 3 James Holt/Archie Holt (BMW 325i); 4 Elliot Dale/Charlotte Ryall (Ford Escort); 5 Mike Farrall/Zach Burns (Jaguar SS100); 6 Ken Binstead/Sarah Binstead (Austin Healey 3000); 7 Dick Baines/Harry Baines (Mini Cooper S); 8 Steve Chick/Alex Chick (Datsun 260Z); 9 Mike Dixon/Liz Dixon (MG Midget); 10 Bent Jakobsen/Martin Jakobsen (Alvis Silver Eagle Special). **Class winners:** Dale/Ryall; Farrall/Burns; Binstead/Binstead; Baines/Baines; John Gearing/Andrew Duerden (MGB); Michael Moss/James Ewing (VW Golf); David Roberts/Melanie Roberts (VW Golf).

TOUR OF THE SPERRINS: MAGHERAFELT MOTOR CLUB BY JASON CRAIG MAY 20

JENNINGS HEADS THE PACE, GREER BAGS THE BIG POINTS

Garry Jennings and Rory Kennedy moved their Ford Fiesta R5 into the lead before the half-time service on the Tour or Sperrins and increased their small margin advantage on each stage of the second loop to head home early leader Jonathan Greer home by five seconds.

Following an accident in Killarney, Greer and Niall Burns were building confidence again and set fastest time on the 5.5-mile opener by 1.4s before understeer issues on SS2, Glenhull. The Northern Ireland championship contenders added more weight to their Citroen C3 Rally2 package at service by carrying two spare tyres and that helped them to claim maximum points thanks to an unregistered Jennings.

For the winning Kesh businessman, traction was an issue too but disconnecting an anti-roll bar at service worked. Thereafter, there was only a brief concern on the penultimate stage with thoughts of a puncture – which turned out to not be the case – forcing a careful approach.

A wrong tyre choice meant Desi Henry and Paddy Robinson were 13.4s down on the leader after SS3 despite going faster than Greer on the first attempt at Barnes Gap. By the end 19.2s separated Henry and Robinson from the winners.

Jason Mitchell feels he is "going in the right direction" following testing and snatching a last-stage fourth-place finish with Paddy McCrudden in a Volkswagen Polo R5. Jason Dickson and well-travelled Martin Brady were ahead but a half-spin on their first closed-road rally in an R5-spec Fiesta ultimately lost the pair fourth, 2s from matching Mitchell. Gareth Sayers also had a spin in sixth.

Results

Organiser: Magherafelt and District Motor Club Ltd **When:** May 20 **Where:** Magherafelt **Championship:** Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship **Starters:** 100 **Stages:** six

1 Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy (Ford Fiesta R5) 39m46s; 2 Jonathan Greer/Niall Burns (Citroen C3 Rally2) +5s; 3 Desi Henry/Paddy Robinson (Citroen C3 Rally2); 4 Jason Mitchell/Paddy McCrudden (Volkswagen Polo GTi R5); 5 Jason Dickson/Martin Brady (Ford Fiesta R5); 6 Gareth Sayers/Gareth Gilchrist (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 7 Ian Dickson/Kenny Bustard (Ford Fiesta R5); 8 Martin Cairns/Peter Ward (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 9 Frank Kelly/Lauren Kelly (Ford Escort Mk2); 10 Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson (Ford Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Tommy O'Connell/Paul Hughes (Ford Escort RS1800 Mk1); Conor Wilson/Katie Wilson (Ford Fiesta R2); Philip White/Brian Rowan (Nissan Micra); Gareth Deazley/Damien Fleming (Ford Fiesta R200); Eamonn McGuigan/Domhnall Lennon (Ford Escort Mk2); Alexander Cochrane/Conor Dunlop (Ford Escort Mk2); Kelly/Kelly; Niall Devine/John McCay (Mitsubishi Lancer); Greer/Burns; Jennings/Kennedy.

Photos: William Neill

Jennings built carefully on his pace advantage

SPORTING SCENE NEWS

RALLYCROSS HISTORY TO BE CELEBRATED AT LYDDEN HILL'S JULY SHOWPIECE

The sport's heritage to be highlighted at Kent spectacular alongside World RX

Photos: Ant Jenkins, Colin Casserley, Irish RX, Lydden Hill

Gp B beasts will be part of the show to celebrate rallycross heritage

By Hal Ridge

Rallycross history will be celebrated during the UK's round of the World Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill on July 22-23.

Accompanying the all-electric headline World RX categories, on-track performances and static displays are planned for the Kent event, featuring Group B and period four-wheel-drive cars and including a number of machines that haven't been seen in public for decades.

While the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy Supercars will have a points-scoring round of the series at the World RX event, a selection of period two-wheel-drive cars from the Retro Rallycross Championship category will join the four-wheel-drive machinery in demonstrations.

Circuit manager Hannah Rynston said: "We're so excited to have the world's best rallycross drivers racing some of the fastest-ever all-electric cars in World RX at Lydden Hill this summer, and what better way to celebrate the current era along with the rich history of the discipline than having a selection of some of the most iconic and legendary machinery and people at the event too.

"I'm sure fans will love the sights, sounds and smells of the period cars on track, and we have some special surprises on track and in the paddock too. Watch this space."

The biggest-ever event for period rallycross machinery was held at Loheac in France last weekend, where a range of Group B and other machines were run on track, joined by a number of British and Irish drivers.

They included Ollie O'Donovan in his Peugeot 306, Adam Keeler in a Will Gollop MG Metro 6R4, Pat Doran and Steve Harris in their Ford RS200s and a range of cars from the Retro RX field.

GRAHAM AIMS EVEN HIGHER IN NEW Mk7 FORD FIESTA

Irish Rallycross Championship contender Tommy Graham has updated his Supercar machinery ahead of the third and fourth rounds of the British and Irish series' joint event at Mondello Park next month.

A rallycross stalwart, Graham has most recently raced an ex-Dermot Carnegie Ford Fiesta Supercar in the Irish series, since 2018, and won the final round of the 2022 campaign in January.

Now the former Ford Escort racer has purchased an ex-Kevin Procter Ford Fiesta Mk7 Supercar to contest the remainder of the Irish series.

The car, based on an M-Sport developed Super2000 platform but running a Mountune two-litre turbo engine, was run by ATM Engineering and was campaigned by Procter in British and European events from 2014. It brought success, including winning the Yorkshireman's second Rallycross Grand Prix and rounds of the British series.

Graham drove the car for the first time at the Limerick Rallysprint in Ireland last weekend.

Tommy Graham has switched to a Ford Fiesta Mk7

The sand racing car has been now adapted for the hills

RAYSON PARTNERSHIP TO FOCUS ON MAINLAND

Guernsey hillclimbers Emma and Scott Rayson are tackling events on the mainland this season in their Empire Evo and Chevrolet Special sand racer respectively.

The husband-and-wife team will do several events here, as well as up to seven events back in the Channel Islands.

Emma has recently stepped up to the Empire with 1070 cc Suzuki power and she set a new ladies record at Val de Terres last year. She has an ambition to qualify for the British Hillclimb Championship top 12 runoff at her local Guernsey hill.

Her husband Scott, meanwhile, is driving the mighty 6.5-litre Chevrolet engined former sand racing single-seater special, one of the most spectacular cars currently on the hills.

BRISCA F2 ROUND-UP

Teenager Wilson lands the final victory at Skegness

Wilson was the star F2 man

Josh Wilson took his maiden BriSCA Formula 2 final win with an assured performance at Skegness last weekend.

Dale Seneschall Jr shoved aside early leader Gary Wrench to move in front, with Wilson following through. Seventeen-year-old Wilson then made his move for the lead before half-distance. He proceeded to pull away and, despite a 30-car final, faced little traffic until the closing stages.

The Huddersfield racer then dealt well with the backmarkers to come home ahead of Seneschall and Kelvyn Marshall, the leading star-graded driver among a competitive field. Marshall's KMR concern had built all of the first three cars home.

"I'm over the moon with that," said Wilson, who races alongside his twin brother Jake. "We keep trying our best to get as quick as we can."

Luke Wrench was fourth ahead of Micky Brennan, who had won the previous night's World of Shale qualifying round at Mildenhall.

Danny McCarthy led from before half-distance on the Suffolk shale but was chased down and passed by Charley Tomblin, with Brennan following a lap later. Tomblin held on to take the chequered flag but he, along with McCarthy and Dave Polley, was docked two places for jumping the restart, handing victory to Brennan.

Mark Paulson

Results

Organiser: Spedeworth **When:** May 20 **Where:** Mildenhall Stadium **Starters:** 42.
1 Micky Brennan; 2 Pat Issitt; 3 Charley Tomblin; 4 Billy Webster; 5 Danny McCarthy; 6 Dave Polley; 7 Mike Philip; 8 Gordon Moodie; 9 Jack Witts; 10 Jordon Thackra.

Organiser: Autospeed **When:** May 21 **Where:** Skegness Raceway **Starters:** 46.
1 Josh Wilson; 2 Dale Seneschall Jr; 3 Kelvyn Marshall; 4 Luke Wrench; 5 Micky Brennan; 6 Ben Lockwood; 7 Caiden Morrison; 8 Gary Wrench; 9 Liam Rennie; 10 Billy Webster.

BRISCA F1: KING'S LYNN BY COLIN CASSERLEY MAY 20

HARRISON GRABS HIS GOOD FORTUNE WITH A COMEBACK VICTORY

In motorsport, and especially stockcar racing, a driver needs a ton of talent and a slice of luck. There is no doubt Ryan Harrison has the former and, on Saturday at King's Lynn, he got the latter when the leading duo of Tom Harris and Craig Finnikin crashed out on the final turn, which allowed Harrison to take the chequered flag.

Marc Clayton took the early lead but he surrendered top spot to Lenny Smith shortly after an early-race caution, which turned out to be the only yellow flag period of the race.

Behind the race leader, Harris and Mat Newson were slicing through the field with Harrison a few car lengths behind. Harris took the lead just before the halfway point.

As the laps wound down, Finnikin made his move. He advanced into second on the penultimate lap. Going into the final turn, Finnikin made a kamikaze attempt to remove Harris.

Harris' car spun and trapped Finnikin's machine against the wall. All that allowed Harrison to sneak by for the win. Newson barged Smith wide on the last laps to come home in second place.

Harrison, who was making his return to racing following a ban and driving a brand-new car, said: "I was in right place at the right time. Finnikin had to go for it, that is what we are here for…

"With the new car I was just taking my time and getting some laps in. You can't win it on the first lap and I turned it up towards the end."

The defeated Newson said: "I made good ground early on, but my car went away towards the end. I made the wrong set-up choice as normally there would be a few more yellow flags and the track would be watered again during the cautions flag. But that is the way it goes."

Results

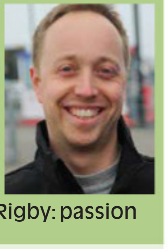
Organiser: Trackstar, BriSCA F1 **When:** May 20 **Where:** King's Lynn, Norfolk **Starters:** 45.
1 Ryan Harrison; 2 Mat Newson; 3 Lenny Smith; 4 Charlie Sworder; 5 Craig Finnikin; 6 Paul Hines; 7 Liam Gilbank; 8 Ashely England; 9 Jelle Tesselaar; 10 Niels Tesselaar

Harrison made the most of his return with a late win

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

JAMES RIGBY



Racing priest
Age: 35 **Lives:** Chorleywood

Rigby: passion

He raced single-seaters
"I did seven years of karting as a teenager and then got into Formula Ford. Then I did a little bit of Formula Renault but it didn't work out with the single-seater career path. I took that sideways step into prototype endurance racing, sharing cars in the VdeV Series and Speed Series. I was an instructor and driver coach and worked for Mercedes."

He had a faith
"I was brought up in a Christian home and I went to a youth group when I was a teenager. Then motorsport became my profession and that took over my life. My faith journey came back into the picture when I moved back to Watford and started going to church in Watford."

There was more than racing
"As Christians we talk about our relationship with God and I got to know God again. I started praying to God: 'What are you saying to me about where I'm meant to be? What is my life for? Motor racing is great. It's a great sport and it's my passion as well'. But it wasn't all that my life was meant to be."

He followed his faith
"One day I was instructing at Silverstone in the passenger seat of an Aston Martin. I sensed God saying 'your life is going around in circles', which as a racing driver I could relate to! It was saying you need to step out this for a while and I'll show you where you're meant to be. I had to take a step of faith into the unknown in order to see where God was going to take me."

He's been ordained
"Back in 2011 I stepped away from motorsport. It wasn't until 2017 or 2018 that I sensed that serving the church in a leadership role was where I was meant to be. Then the ordination journey started. There's a couple of years of deciding if it is right and then three years' doing a theology course at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, and then being ordained in 2021. I'm now a priest in the Church of England."

Getting back racing again
"I've got back into racing with the Jesus Saves racing team in Classic FF1600 after an eight- or nine-year gap. Initially, I came in as a driver coach and helping on the pastoral side of the team. But because of my driving background, they've got me back in the driving seat."

ANNUAL HISTORIC RALLY FESTIVAL SET TO BE BEST YET

Telford-based showpiece ready to expand for the 2023 edition

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Fans will get the chance to see the cars in action

By Paul Lawrence

A capacity 80-car entry, a brand-new special stage and at least 10 Group B cars are some of the key features of this year's Historic Rally Festival.

Based once again at Weston Park near Telford on the weekend of September 30-October 1, the non-competitive demonstration event will feature its biggest field of rally cars to date with cars from the late 1950s right through to the current day.

Event promoter Warner Lewis has secured the use of the Hatton Court estate near Shifnal for four special stages on Saturday, which will be open to the public. After a service halt on Saturday afternoon at Weston Park, two stages will run there into the evening dusk before a full six stages at Weston Park on Sunday. As before, the event will run to Motorsport UK regulations with full marshalling and safety cover.

Lewis told Motorsport News: "We've had a great response and we could have as many as 14 Group B cars. We ran 50 cars last year, but this year we're going to be full at 80. We've got some people coming from Europe this year and Louise Aitken-Walker will be coming as our guest to meet and greet the fans."

The asphalt Hatton Court stage is just under two miles long and will start at 1000hrs on Saturday. It will run four times through until mid-afternoon. Spectators will then be able to see the cars at service in Weston Park before the two evening stages at the popular rally venue.

STEVENSON-WHEELER OVERCOMES LAST-MINUTE MANX DRAMA

Runner-up in class was the result for Stevenson-Wheeler

After a last-minute rush to convert his gravel spec Ford Escort Mk2 to asphalt trim, Barry Stevenson-Wheeler was elated to finish as the second historic runner on the recent Manx Rally.

Stevenson-Wheeler was due to use an all-new Tarmac spec car but that suffered a blown head-gasket on a shakedown run on Epynt two weeks earlier. Rather than try and get the engine rebuilt, the decision was taken to convert the older gravel car for the island event.

"A week before the Manx we had a mountain to climb," said Stevenson-Wheeler. "We swapped the suspension and back axle into the old car. But I really enjoyed the rally and it was quite emotional!"

They had to change a broken radiator on Friday night, but the old car served him well. Its next event will be the Nicky Grist Stages in July while the fresh asphalt car is likely to be out in September.

WALKER TAKES MANX RESULT ON ISLAND DEBUT

Walker was pleased to finish

On a rare foray on to asphalt, historic Ford Escort Mk2 driver Alan Walker and co-driver Dan Petrie successfully finished the recent Manx Rally at the first attempt, finishing 19th overall and as the third historic.

"We finished with the steering rack held on with a ratchet strap but it's been a brilliant rally," said Walker. "It is just so fast over here: really, really quick. The organisers have been so helpful."

Petrie is the BHRC champion co-driver as he usually sits alongside Henri Grehan.

A return to gravel for his local Woodpecker Rally is likely to come next as Walker prepares for the Roger Albert Clark Rally, but more asphalt events could also feature in his schedule.

MODSPORTS RACE-WINNER FLETCHER PASSES AWAY

Motorsport News is sad to record the death of Jon Fletcher at the age of 84 after a long illness.

The Lancastrian was best known for countless successes in his Modified Sports Lotus Elan, which he raced through the 1970s to great success. Fletcher started competing with a Lotus 7 in the early 1960s and also raced a Cooper T59 before acquiring an Elan 26R.

He moved to Modsports and was one of Britain's most successful drivers in the category. He later dabbled in touring cars with a Chevrolet Camaro and raced Chevrons internationally before ending his racing career in Porsches in the early 1990s.

He raced for 30 years, always with his wife Carole alongside him.

Fletcher was a well-known racer in his Lotus Elan

IN BRIEF

Smith for hire
Rob Smith hired a Ford Escort Mk2 from Meirion Evans at Wales Motorsport to contest the recent Manx Rally after his own historic-spec Mk2 was damaged on the Killarney Rally of the Lakes. "It's in the body shop," said Smith of his own car after he went off into a bank on the Ballaghbeama stage. Unfortunately, his luck on the Isle of Man was no better and he and co-driver Alun Cook retired on the first day with engine issues.

GP at the Masters
An encouraging 17-car field of pre '85 Grand Prix cars will gather at Brands Hatch this weekend on the Masters Racing Legends grid. The Grand Prix circuit meeting on Saturday and Sunday features a full programme of Masters racing including the 90-minute Gentleman Drivers endurance race on Saturday afternoon.

Smith realises dream
Ben Smith finally contested an event on the Isle of Man earlier this month after watching rallies there as a teenager. Smith and his co-driving father Steven went out on Saturday morning of the Manx Rally with broken suspension on their Pinto-powered Ford Escort Mk1, the same car that Smith Sr took to a famous overall historic victory on the 2004 Manx.

HRCR heads for Kent
Saturday's Hughes Historic Rally in Kent marks the fourth round of the Motorsport News HRCR Clubmans Rally Championship. One of the few remaining competitive rallies in Kent will feature 120 miles of regularity sections and a series of special tests. Leading the field away will be last year's winners, Leigh Powley and Brian Goff in their Toyota Corolla, with notable opposition from Steven Owens and Nick Bloxham (Porsche 911).

Busy Silverstone
Around 350 cars will be in action at Silverstone for the Historic Sports Car Championship's International Trophy meeting on the Grand Prix circuit this weekend. Headlining the action will be rounds three and four of the Historic F2 International Series backed up by fields for the Guards Trophy, with 30 cars, and 62 Formula Fords across the Historic and Classic grids.

Rowlands in charge
Heading into round four of the Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship North Wales driver Will Rowlands has a healthy lead in the historic category within the championship. Rowlands and co-driver Emyr Hall were mighty on the Isle of Man to finish 10th overall in their Group 4 Ford Escort Mk2. Despite an initial poor seeding for the Jim Clark Rally, Rowlands will head north in a bid to further extend his lead.

BRM heads to the hill
The fabulous BRM V16 recreation will be in action on the hill at Prescott on Saturday during the Prescott Historique event. The P15 will be demonstrated and go on display along with a collection of other famous BRM racing cars. There are plans run the complex engine on sustainable fuel to show what can be done to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

Two wins for Sutton cemented top slot

The three-time champion was celebrating once more at Snetterton

SUTTON SUPREME AS THE TITLE RACE SPARKS INTO LIFE

Matt James reports as the two most recent BTCC champions share the honours at Snetterton

Last year's British Touring Car Championship showdown was ultimately a fight between Motorbase Performance Ford Focus driver Ash Sutton and the eventual winner Tom Ingram in his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai. On the evidence of last weekend's meeting at Snetterton, it could be a very familiar story come Brands Hatch in October.

Two outstanding wins for Sutton at Snetterton last weekend pushed the three-time champion to the summit of the points table and a race-three victory for Ingram, which was taken despite the driver being extremely unwell over the course of the meeting, means the reigning champ is only seven points in arrears.

The races at Snetterton might have lacked the fizz and sparkle of some of the more recent events, but the mixed-up tyre strategies and some remarkable comeback drives kept the interest up throughout the battles.

Race 1

Sutton's rich vein of form continued with pole position at a record-breaking pace. His double race-winning weekend last time out vaulted him to third in the points table, which meant he tackled the three-mile Norfolk track with only five seconds of hybrid power compared to 15 for those further down the championship table.

He nevertheless lapped 0.3 seconds faster than Ingram. Row two was shared by the WSR BMW team-mates Colin Turkington and Jake Hill. The major casualty from qualifying was table-topper Dan Cammish (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus), whose early error of judgement when he clipped a tyre stack forced him into the barriers on the exit of Hamilton and consigned him to start in 25th place.

Sutton's domination at Brands Hatch two weeks ago put fear into his rivals, but this time there was an extra factor for the opposition to use to try and haul in the Ford. All three of the Goodyear tyres – the hard, the medium and the soft – were employed in Norfolk and drivers wouldn't have to declare their choices until they took to the grid.

The dilemma was what the temperature would do across the afternoon. The softer tyres were likely to wilt more rapidly in the higher temperatures but it was felt would be quicker over a race distance, while the harder covers would take more time to heat up but then be more durable.

Sutton opted for the mediums to start race one, while those around him aimed to capitalise on a strong qualifying performance and bolted on the white-walled softer rubber.

"I knew I had to make the most of [the mediums] at the start," said winner Sutton. "I drove the first three laps like they were qualifying laps – that is where I attacked it – and if it hadn't have been for those laps, I don't think I would have won that one.

"The BMWs were always going to come on strong at the end of the race, and so it proved. It was a gamble to go on mediums, but I believed in the car and in myself."

It was just as well that he had put his foot down at the start as the BMW train was indeed coming. After Ingram fluffed his getaway and dropped to fifth, Turkington took up the chase of the leader but was powerless to halt the Focus's march. Sutton was three seconds clear after three laps.

"My car was quite pointy to begin with," said Turkington. "The front was gripping a lot, while I was using the rear tyres very hard and I could feel them falling away."

Hill had quickly deposed of a fast-starting Ricky Collard (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) and then set off after the sister machine of Turkington. He inched up to the 330e M Sport's rear bumper and then pounced down the Bentley Straight on lap nine.

The pair brushed side-by-side as Hill used a superior exit from Williams and the slipstream – plus his remaining hybrid – to make his move. The Laser Tools-backed BMW took the position, partly on the grass, and then set off to zero in on Sutton, although he failed by a couple of tenths of a second.

"You've got to do what you've got to do," he said of his robust pass on Turkington to seal runners-up spot. "Especially if he isn't playing ball…

"I needed one more lap to get Ash," he added. "My car was perfect and a joy to drive. I am pleased with second place."

Behind the top three, Ingram restored himself to fourth after passing Adam Morgan (WSR BMW 330e M Sport) and Collard, the latter set for retirement when a stone went through the radiator of his hatchback.

Stephen Jelley (WSR BMW 330e M Sport) claimed a lonely sixth from the first of the drivers who had opted for the harder tyres, Dan Rowbottom. The Motorbase Performance Ford Focus man held off the Independents Trophy winner Josh Cook (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) – who was also on hard tyres – for seventh spot. The hard-tyred Rory Butcher (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) and the soft-tyred Aron Taylor-Smith (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) rounded out the top 10.

Cammish: out of luck at the weekend

One of the performances of the race came from Cammish. After his qualifying faux pas, he took the hard-tyre pain in race one and can't have expected very much. He swashbuckled his way through the early laps and was into the top 15 points-paying positions after just three laps. An 11th-place finish was his reward which, in terms of damage limitation, was a job well done.

Race 2

With the rear-wheel-drive BMW of Hill alongside for the second dash into Riches, Sutton's job to maintain top slot at the beginning of the second encounter was arguably harder, but the NAPA-backed front-wheel-drive Ford now had the softer Goodyears bolted on to it while Hill was on the medium selection.

A peach of a getaway helped the three-time champion reach the first right-hander in top position, and he mirrored his tactics in the opener to dominate the race. He was an incredible 2.2 seconds to the good at the end of the opening lap, and then he said he had measured his pace over the remaining 11 tours to land his 31st career victory.

"I was on the right tyre this time," beamed the winner. "Again, I pushed hard at the start to break away. I was in semi-management mode after that because I was not sure how it would hang on and I wanted to have a little bit in hand. Anything can happen in the BTCC and I was wary of a late-race safety car coming out, so I knew I needed some life left."

His fears went unrealised and Hill was left to hang on to his coattails. The MB Motorsport-tended car was more than 3.5s in arrears at the end. "'There is just no beating that Ford," he rued. "I had to race my own race and I am happy with another trophy and second place. I can only control what I can control and there is no point worrying about anything else, so I am satisfied."

Turkington, also on the medium rubber, followed Hill at a respectful distance. He was happier with his car, but was forced to look to his mirrors over the closing stages as Rowbottom, now using the preferred softer tyres, cemented a great climb through the pack to land fourth place.

The Focus man had dispatched Jelley and the hard-tyred Ingram on lap one, and then hunted down Morgan. The BMW fell prey to Rowbottom at Wilson on lap four and then he set off after a podium place, which he narrowly failed to land.

Turkington said: "I knew that with five laps to go, Dan behind me had five laps of hybrid power left and I had to focus hard on keeping it tidy and not making mistakes. I managed to do that, and I am chuffed with another podium."

Morgan landed a lonely fifth position with Jelley following him home. Ingram had dropped behind the BMW on lap seven as he brought the Hyundai to the flag, and he headed the battling Speedworks Corolla of Butcher and Sam Osborne's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus.

Dan Lloyd (Team Hard Cupra R) and Cammish both wriggled free of the hard-defending Taylor-Smith, who was saddled with the harder tyres, to compete the top 11.

There were, seemingly, no struggles for Sutton and his weekend got even better – if it could – when he drew the number six out of the reversed-grid draw pot. That meant he would only drop to the third row whereas the worst-case scenario could have been 12th. "With the hard tyres for race three, it is going to be hard work," said the double victory. "It is going to be all about survival."

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Hills Speed Images, Steve Hindle

Race 3

With Jelley and Morgan sharing the front row, the prospects for BMW looked fair in race three, but they were both saddled with the harder rubber – as was Turkington, starting fourth, and Hill starting fifth.

The interlopers at the front were third-placed Rowbottom, on medium tyres, and the fourth row, which comprised Ingram and the soft-shod Toyota of Butcher.

Those interlopers soon became a thorn in the side for the BeeEmms. Rowbottom made short work of the leading trio and sliced into the lead at Williams on lap two and Ingram was hard on his bumper. Towards the end of the lap, Butcher made his presence felt as he climbed up to third. The hard rubber was clearly not working…

Rowbottom held firm for as long as he could, but champion Ingram was not to be denied. He followed his prey for two laps before darting to the inside of the Focus as the cars approached Riches to grab the lead and power to his maiden win of 2023.

"I had to work hard for that one, and it has taken everything out of me," said the poorly victor. "In fact, all day has been hard work…"

Rowbotton began to slide down the order as first Butcher passed him at Nelson on lap four and then Cammish, on a charge on his softer rubber, made his move at the Wilson hairpin on lap six (aided by a compliant team-mate).

Cammish wasn't done and chopped inside Butcher for second place at Oggies on lap seven and the podium positions were set fair. Or so everyone thought.

Cammish's comeback had earned a podium and capped a never-give-up attitude, but when the scrutineering roller failed to fit underneath the car, it was clear that the hatchback had failed the rideheight test and Cammish was kicked out of second spot. "I did everything I needed to do behind the wheel so I can be happy with my part of the job," said the disappointed Yorkshireman. "We win as a team and we lose as a team. I mucked up yesterday [with the qualifying spill], so we have to take things on the chin."

Behind the newly promoted Butcher and Rowbottom in the top three, Sutton performed the survival job he had hinted at and was fourth in another bumper points weekend.

The drive of the race came from fifth-placed Cook. Race two had been thwarted by a throttle problem on the grid that meant the team were working on the car beyond their permitted time to get him going. Contact on lap one then caused a puncture for which he pitted, and then he had to return to the pitlane to serve a drivethrough for the grid infraction. It meant he finished 27th. Starting from 26th on the grid (Jade Edwards in her Team Hard Cupra was unable to take the start due to a broken subframe), Cook monstered up the order in his soft-tyre shod Honda to vault into the top 10 by lap eight and gradually picked off the slithering BMW train to claw his way to redemption.

"I really enjoyed that race," said Cook. "We had made changes to the car which pushed us in a really good direction, and when the car is that fast, it can't help but put a smile on your face,"

He led home Jelley and Turkington, with Aiden Moffat (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R), Morgan and Hill completing the top 10.

A race-three victory opened Ingram's account for the 2023 season

Cook was the stand-out performer in race three in his Honda

SUPPORT RACES

Processional races were, unfortunately, very much the theme of the British Touring Car support series at Snetterton with the battle for third in the Mini Challenge finale one of the few exceptions.

Behind Graves Motorsport's first-time victor Nelson King and Joe Tanner, there was a great scrap involving champions Sam Weller (on a guest outing with Hybrid Tune) and Dan Zelos, along with Dominic Wheatley and Bradley Gravett. Wheatley ultimately secured the place with a move on Zelos down the inside at Wilson Hairpin on what proved to be the penultimate lap as the race was red-flagged. Excelr8's Zelos comfortably won the first two contests and grabbed the points lead from Will Orton, who twice retired with overheating woes.

James Lay (Doris Motorsport) was the star of the Radical Cup UK's first BTCC appearance, winning all three races at a canter. The SR1 class was closer in the first encounter with Tom Wood just defying Theo Micouris before the latter then triumphed on the next two occasions.

While the Radical winners were likely victory contenders, it was more surprising to see Am racer Marc Warren grab two overall Porsche Sprint Challenge GB successes. Last year's Ginetta GT Academy conqueror twice defied his younger and more fancied rivals to score a brilliant brace for Raceway Motorsport, Team Parker's Matthew Armstrong unable to challenge either time. "I'm a little bit in shock!," admitted Warren. "To have two overall race wins at the second weekend is incredible." Redline's Toby Trice earlier defied his points-leading team-mate Steve Roberts in a tight opener.

There was not much time for the British Formula 4 bouts to be processional as the category only managed 16 racing laps all weekend. And three of those were in a twice red-flagged opener that was ultimately abandoned and will be run at Donington Park in August following a hefty crash for Daniel Guinchard at Coram. Virtuosi's Aqil Alibhai became 2023's sixth different winner in the stop-start reversed-grid battle, while Rodin Carlin's Dion Gowda led throughout race three to close the gap to team-mate Louis Sharp at the summit of the standings..

Stephen Lickorish

RACE WINNERS

- **Mini Challenge**
Races 1 & 2: Dan Zelos (Excelr8 Motorsport); **Race 3:** Nelson King (Graves Motorsport)

- **Radical Cup UK**
Races 1, 2 & 3: James Lay (Doris Motorsport)

- **British Formula 4**
Race 1: Aqil Alibhai (Virtuosi Racing); **Race 2:** Dion Gowda (Rodin Carlin)

- **Porsche Sprint Challenge GB**
Race 1: Toby Trice (Redline Racing); **Races 2 & 3:** Marc Warren (Raceway Motorsport)

Zelos marched to two victories in the opening two Mini races

RESULTS

Snetterton

Round 7

Laps: 12 Track: Dry

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Ash Sutton (3)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST	23m23.332s
2	Jake Hill (5) (S)	WSR BMW 330e M Sport	+0.270s
3	Colin Turkington (4) (S)	WSR BMW 330e M Sport	+3.283s
4	Tom Ingram (2) (S)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N	+4.541s
5	Adam Morgan (S)	WSR BMW 330e M Sport	+12.961s
6	Stephen Jelley (S)	WSR BMW 330e M Sport	+13.177s
7	Dan Rowbottom (H)	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST	+24.648s
8	Josh Cook (H)	One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R	+29.285s
9	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla	+32.283s
10	Aron Taylor-Smith (S)	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	+32.562s

11 Dan Cammish (1) (H) (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST) +33.619s; 12 Ronan Pearson (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) +34.895s; 13 Sam Osborne (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST) +34.897s; 14 George Gamble (H) (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) +40.414s; 15 Dan Lloyd (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +42.828s; 16 Bobby Thompson (6) (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +42.950s; 17 Mikey Doble (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) +43.591s; 18 Andrew Watson (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) +43.899s; 19 Aiden Moffat (H) (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) +48.238s; 20 Dexter Patterson (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +48.429s; 21 Jack Butel (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +49.702s; 22 Will Powell (H) (One Motorsport Honda Civic Type R) +57.327s; 23 Nic Hamilton (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +57.986s; 24 Tom Chilton (7) (H) (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) +1m02.401s; 25 Jade Edwards (H) (Team Hard Cupra R) +1m03.570s; 26 Nick Halstead (H) (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) +1m12.115s; R Ricky Collard (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) 8 laps/water pump. **Pole position:** Sutton 1m54.526s (93.32mph). **Winner's average speed:** 91.39mph. **Fastest lap:** Ingram 1m55.090s (92.86mph). **Lap leaders:** Sutton 1-12.

Round 8: 12 laps Track: Dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sutton (1) (S)	23m28.479s
2	Hill (2)	+3.614s
3	Turkington (3)	+4.370s
4	Rowbottom (7) (S)	+4.653s
5	Morgan (5)	+10.968s
6	Jelley (6)	+14.681s
7	Ingram (4) (H)	+15.769s
8	Butcher	+20.304s
9	Osborne (S)	+20.726s
10	Lloyd (S)	+20.806s

11 Cammish +22.715s; 12 Taylor-Smith +31.389s; 13 Collard (S) +31.878s; 14 Pearson (S) +32.543; 15 Chilton (S) +32.851s; 16 Gamble +33.901s; 17 Moffat +34.392s; 18 Watson (S) +34.800s; 19 Doble (S) +35.349s; 20 Thompson +36.828s; 21 Butel (S) +38.203s; 22 Patterson +38.542s; 23 Powell (S) +41.861s; 24 Hamilton +52.186s; 25 Halstead +54.757s; 26 Edwards +55.852s; 27 Cook -1 lap. **Winner's average speed:** 91.06mph. **Fastest lap:** Sutton 1m54.871s (93.04mph). **Lap leaders:** Sutton 1-12.

Round 9: 11 laps Track: Dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Ingram (7)	21m37.465s
2	Butcher (S)	+5.594s
3	Rowbottom (4)	+6.869s
4	Sutton (1) (H)	+9.428s
5	Cook (S)	+15.122s
6	Jelley (6) (H)	+16.241s
7	Turkington (3) (H)	+16.349s
8	Moffat (S)	+16.993s
9	Morgan (5) (H)	+17.832s
10	Hill (2) (H)	+18.096s

11 Chilton +18.976s; 12 Thompson (S) +19.362s; 13 Patterson (S) +19.665s; 14 Collard (H) +26.688s; 15 Doble (H) +29.578s; 16 Butel +30.287s; 17 Lloyd +30.601s; 18 Watson (H) +32.242s; 19 Powell +33.785s; 20 Osborne (H) +44.431s; 21 Halstead (S) +1m05.177s; R Hamilton (S) 8 laps; R Pearson (H) 3 laps; R Taylor-Smith (H) 2 laps; R Gamble (S) 0 laps. EXC: Cammish (S) +0.587s. NS: Edwards. **Winner's average speed:** 90.61mph. **Fastest lap:** Cammish 1m56.593s (91.67mph). **Lap leaders:** 1 Jelley 2-4 Rowbottom; 5-11 Ingram.

Laps with hybrid: (1) = 1; (2) = 2; (3) = 3; (4) = 4 ; (5) = 5; (6) = 6; 7 = (7); cars from eighth place downwards have eight laps of hybrid use. (H) = Hard Goodyear tyre; (S) = Soft Goodyear tyre; others = medium

Drivers standings

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Ash Sutton	135
2	Tom Ingram	128
3	Colin Turkington	109
4	Dan Cammish	98
5	Jake Hill	98
6	Dan Rowbottom	69
7	Adam Morgan	65
8	Rory Butcher	63
9	Josh Cook	58
10	Bobby Thompson	52

11 Tom Chilton 50; 12 Stephen Jelley 44; 13 Ricky Collard 40; 14 Sam Osborne 35; 15 Aron Taylor-Smith 27; 16 George Gamble 26; 17 Dan Lloyd 23; 18 Aiden Moffat 19; 19 Andrew Watson 17; 20 Mikey Doble 12; 21 Ronan Pearson 12; 22 Nic Hamilton 10; 23 Dexter Patterson 6; 24 Nick Halstead 4.

Independents Trophy

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Cook	141
2	Thompson	140
3	Lloyd	118
4	Moffat	110
5	Patterson	94
6	Doble	89
7	Watson	86
8	Taylor-Smith	85
9	Jack Butel	64
10	Hamilton	59

11 Will Powell 50; 12 Jade Edwards 23. **Jack Sears Trophy:** 1 Osborne 139; 2 Patterson 131; 3 Pearson 112; 4 Doble 110; 5 Watson 109; 6 Butel 91.

ROB BELL: McLAREN MASTER

The McLaren factory star has taken plenty of GT race and championship success, while playing a vital development role for the manufacturer. He tells more to Graham Keilloh

McLaren man and much more

In Motorsport News's readers' Q&As we are familiar with those who have been there and done that. But in the realms of GT competition there are surely few who have been and there and done that to the extent that Rob Bell has.

The Newcastle-upon-Tyne native had plenty of success in karting and then on the first rungs of the single-seater ladder – twice winning the Formula Renault UK Winter Series – while competing against an array of serious contemporaries. But having encountered the oh-so common barrier of running out of cash, Bell set his sights on GTs and sportscars.

You name the blue-riband sportscar event and Bell has raced in it. This includes no fewer than nine Le Mans 24 Hours appearances, 12 outings in the Spa 24 Hours and three appearances in the Daytona 24 Hours where he finished second in class in 2011. He's also raced in the Sebring 12 Hours five times, the Bathurst 12 Hour twice, and in Petit Le Mans.

Bell's won bucket loads of GT races and has bagged several championships, with his achievements crowned by winning the Blancpain – now GT World Challenge – Endurance championship in 2016. He also won that year's Asian Le Mans Series title, and since has claimed the International GT Open crown. And these are on top of Le Mans Series GT2 titles won in 2007 and 2008.

Bell also in 2011 got the distinction of becoming the first signed-up McLaren GT factory driver, a role he still retains. And these days, as he explains, the 44-year-old's McLaren factory role goes beyond driving.

He's increasingly involved in management, and has been crucial in developing a host of McLaren GT machines for the track and road. As Bell also explains, he was integral from the very start of the marque's current GT3 racer the 720S and its brand-new GT4 racer the Artura.

This year Bell can be spotted on UK tracks running at the front in British GT, in a promising partnership with Am driver Mark Radcliffe racing an Optimum Motorsport McLaren 720S Evo.

And with all this Bell still finds the time to coach and instruct, including with three recent BRDC Autosport young drivers of the year.

We were very grateful to grab some time in Bell's busy schedule to ask the Motorsport News readers' questions, just before Bell hopped on another flight to do his latest round of testing in Portugal.

Question: Where did motorsport passion start for you and what was it like starting out in the north east of England?
Gavin Johnson
Via email
Rob Bell: "It's a very good question. My dad was always into cars and his group of friends always used to play around with cars. Nothing special of course but it was a bit different back then and I remember it vaguely and a group of them had I think it was an Opel Chevette rally car. It was an old knackered-up thing but they basically used to take it apart and fiddle with it and play with the carbs and rebuild it and drive it round fields.

"[It was] very cheap of course but I do remember it and I remember that passion he had. He did a little bit of schoolboy karting. But the first thing I remember really of [my] passion was driving a car for the first time on an airfield, probably aged eight or nine, just sitting on his lap. And something clicked with me which meant I wanted more and more and more and that's probably where it started from.

"And the north east is probably not known for being a hot bed of motorsport history but I happened to live like I said near an airfield which happened to have a kart track on it which was an outdoor track, it was called Felton kart track which is up in Northumberland and they used to have British Super One events there.

"So that was my link into where it all started and then I did a few indoor karting events and then that was it, the bug was there, and it just cascaded from there and luckily my old man had a van for work and that was our 'chuck the karts in the back' on a Friday night and go to wherever it would be, which like I said would be Felton or a place called Langbaurgh in Middlesbrough, up at Larkhall in Scotland regularly or Rowrah in Cumbria. That was the four tracks that we did consistently, and then you go national and international and I left school to do karting abroad, so that's the background."

Question: When you were fighting with Glaswegian Ryan Dalziel for the 1999 Formula Vauxhall Championship, he indulged in some mind games and said in Motorsport News that "a Geordie was just a Scotsman with their brain removed…" Do you speak to him these days? It was a great fight in FV. Did you enjoy those early days?
James Hilton
Via email
RB: "Yeah absolutely, absolutely. No, I know Ryan. I actually drove with this brother John as well, as a team-mate, I can't remember what year but in America in a Porsche for a one-off race.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, GT World Challenge, International GT Open

Bell has just bagged a British GT podium

"So look at the time it's very competitive, you're all trying to win a championship and you're young and I was particularly stupid at times, as probably we all were to a degree. So we all had a bit of tongue-in-cheek banter and I think that was all part of it. It wasn't mind games it was just being daft rather than being anything else.

"And of course none of us won it, Gary Paffett went on to win the championship and me and Ryan were second and third, he then moved on to live in America, had a great career and I do see him and yes we get on fine, absolutely. It was all part of the young bucks probably as it were but yeah I had forgotten about that, thanks for reminding me [laughs]."

MN: Sorry about that! So at the time was it proper not getting along with him and things like that?

RB: "Yeah at the time we weren't mates, and again that's just young males being young males to be honest, it was nothing malicious. It was just he was beating me at one weekend and I was beating him the next. We probably tangled a few times during the year, bit of contact here and there, again nothing malicious but at the time I didn't like what was going on but I didn't really like anyone who was beating me, and I'm sure they didn't like me because I was beating them so you're just rivals aren't you?

"And at the time you've probably not got quite the manners or the etiquette you should have because you're a young bloke and you live and learn. And I'm sitting here now probably cringing about what I did or didn't say and I'm sure Ryan thinks the same, but no if I ever saw him I'd enjoy a beer with him now and laugh about it really."

Question: Does Rob feel like he could have made it to F1 after winning at every level to get there? PS does he see me as a threat on my push bike? X

Paul O'Neill

Via Instagram

RB: "[Laughs] I'll answer the latter question, no I don't see him as a threat on a push bike.

> "I was good enough for F1 ability wise"
>
> Rob Bell

"Could I have made it to F1? Well I've thought about this a lot over the years and look Formula 1 is every driver's goal and dream, whether they admit that or not, but my dream was Formula 1. When I came through the lower ranks in karting it was myself, Jenson [Button] and Anthony Davidson, and Dan Wheldon was probably a year or two above us as in age wise, but we were the four who were winning in karting in Britain pretty much everything.

"And obviously Jenson went on to be World champion, and deservedly so, and Anthony was in and out of Formula 1 and then had a good sportscar career, and then there's myself who didn't quite make it. And I got pretty close in the 2004-05 time.

"But could I have made it? Yeah I think ability wise I was good enough. Where I didn't do very well was just applying it all and knowing what to do because I wasn't from a motorsport background, I didn't really know what I was doing to be honest, and I focused on the wrong areas at the wrong times. And if you look at Jenson in comparison, Jenson did very well and the way he made it in my view was he always just took the opportunity he was given because he knew what he had to do and he was focused. And not to say I wasn't focused, I was very focused and committed but I just don't think necessarily in the right areas all the time and I think that was a difference and it's very small margins.

"So I don't think it's anything to do with on-track ability really but hats off to those guys who do make it, who just make the right decisions at the right time and make the most of their opportunities. So that's the difference. But of course I'm delighted to have ended up where I have and I've been a professional ever since those days so I've ended up where I am, but I think I probably could have [made it to F1]."

Question: How hard was it to give up on your F1 dream?

Paul Lawrence

Via email

RB: "Well it wasn't very hard really because I ran out of money [laughs], and I had a mortgage to think about at the time, I'd moved down to Northampton to be in a better place in terms of geography for British motorsport.

Bell rates Blancpain title as biggest achievement

"And I was working hard. I paid for my Formula Renault Winter Series by instructing as many people [as I could], as many young drivers do, but I was also waiting on tables on a night time to try and put some together money etc. Like I said, that paid for a Winter Series I did in Formula Renault.

"So what I'm saying is I put a lot of effort in but ultimately when the sponsorship ran dry, because you go through Formula Ford it's a massive amount of money, then you go to Formula Renault it's an even bigger amount of money, then you go to the next step and the jump to what you needed at the time to get to F2 or GP2, whatever it was called at the time, after I'd finished World Series, that was a ridiculously massive amount of money and at the time I didn't have it, simple as that.

"So giving up on the dream was easy because it was just a reality, it was absolutely facts that I needed X amount and I had zero, pretty much. I ran out of money. I was instructing and the obvious thing was to try and then make a living in a different form of motorsport which was then the sportscars and the GT side and I worked my way into that and that's been great. So actually giving up on the dream was just practical really. If you haven't got the dosh you haven't got the dosh, so it was quite easy."

Question: Can you give a bit more information about your role now as a factory driver with McLaren?

Alexander Cameron

Via email

RB: "I've been a factory driver at McLaren since 2011, so I've been there a good while and actually seen a few changes over the years within the organisation. I think I'm one of the few people left from the very start actually, I think there's only two or three of us.

"And my role's evolved, in terms of in the early days I was purely a factory driver, which means you get paid to do all the test and development work on whatever project you are on at the time, GT3 based, and then you're farmed out to teams wherever they want you. So I've been very lucky to be sent all round the world, which has been fantastic.

"But as time's gone on, that role is still there but I have got more experience – I'm not going to say older, I'm going to say more experienced [laughs], although they are linked. As time goes on my role's changed a bit so I'm probably described as the senior driver at McLaren Motorsport now which just means because of my experience in all the test work we do I probably lead it. So in developing a car, so for example the 720, I was in there from [the stage of] 'how you feel getting in the car with the rollcage like this?' and 'where are you going to put the start button?', literally from the ground up I've worked on some of these cars.

"So when we go testing I tend to lead that, and that's something I really enjoy actually because it's a bit more responsibility to be the one who effectively signs a car off to then go and drive around the world with customers, so I know it has to be right and that's a bit more responsibility on my shoulders these days.

"But I also look after the diaries of all of the drivers that we have onboard at McLaren Motorsport, liaise with teams, McLaren management, as to what driver does what, so that's an extra string to my bow. And I'm also more and more involved, not quite day to day yet, but I am becoming more involved in management meetings and just being more involved as a more rounded person within the whole organisation.

"So that's where I've evolved to at the minute, and it's one eye on what would be my next step in my career because driving can't last forever so that's in that evolution."

MN: So how did it first come about for you to be a McLaren factory driver back in 2011?

RB: "I'd done a lot of work with Ferrari and I was never an official factory driver at Ferrari but I did do test work for them and I did a lot tyre development for Dunlop for example and drove in not necessarily Ferrari but more [long-time Ferrari GT

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racing partner] Michelotto. So if the official drivers were unavailable then I'd be the next one Ferrari called, so that was a good starting point.

"And because of that I drove with Andrew Kirkaldy at [Kirkaldy's team] CRS back in the day, they had two Ferraris and then I did my thing, like we all do racing all over the world just as an independent driver. And then Andrew was developing the GT3 car for McLaren, back in the CRS days or McLaren GT as it was called at the time, so the link was there already and he offered me the [McLaren factory] position originally in 2011. I was doing pretty well at the time and winning stuff in Ferraris, but the chance to become the first signed-up McLaren factory driver in GT was pretty special to be honest with you, a bit of an honour, so I jumped at the chance."

MN sets the scene: Bell's younger brother Matt is a regular LMP2 and LMP3 racer, who last year won the Asian Le Mans Series championship and in 2020 won IMSA's LMP3 title.

Question: Who is quicker? You or your brother Matt?
Steven Nye
Via email

RB: "[Laughs] Well it's obviously me isn't it? Of course it's me. Silly question [laughs]."

MN: So Matt, did he follow in your footsteps to get involved in racing?

RB: "Yeah yeah look Matt's a fantastic driver as well, I'd say there's nothing in it really. And he obviously had an older brother then to aim at growing up, I'm 10 years older than Matt, so he had that influence on his life from a very early age. In fact I would imagine he's only ever known motorsport in his life.

"He was actually a really promising rugby player, we all played rugby at school and he was really promising, he had the potential to be professional and had a back injury which basically prevented him going further. And then he always in the back of his head wanted to do motorsport but obviously there's always financial constraints and he got an opportunity and grasped it and he's had a brilliant career and he's doing fantastically well now.

"He's always had me as someone to call and I've gained experience through making errors and I've always said to him well don't make my errors. I'm quite open and honest with whatever I've done wrong and he's taken that onboard and probably benefited from that but ultimately Matt works really hard and he's a really really talented, quick driver and it's nice to see him doing well and I'm really proud of him as well."

MN: How much were you hands on with Matt in terms of helping him?

RB: "Well in the early days I was mechanicing for him in karting, so I was quite hands on, and we speak once a week. It's not all one way of course, I run ideas past him, and he's a bright lad so I take his advice as well. But we speak often and over the years he's probably rang me plenty just for advice, would I do a or b, and I'd like to think we come up with some good decisions together over the years and help each other out."

Question: Which of the cars you have been involved with the development of are you most proud of, and why?
Derek James
Via email

RB: "Again I've been quite lucky actually and I've done quite a few now. So I've done a little bit of the automotive side, my first taste was through Chris Goodwin and doing a little bit on the [McLaren] P1 GTR, so that was back in 2012, '13 ish I think. So that was a little taster of the automotive side and then more recently I was in charge of the dynamic side of the Senna GTR, and again that was quite nice because it was a bit of freedom, it was Kenny Brack as he's the chief test driver now at [McLaren] Automotive but he said to me look we want you to do this because it's not a road car it's a track car, we feel you've got the ability to do that and it was carte blanche really. It was like you're leading it, you go and sort the car out in terms of the dynamics. So that's quite a nice thing to do, quite a special project really to be given the reins on that sort of thing.

"But I still didn't develop it from the very start as in you've still got engineers working out stuff without a driver etc. My proudest achievement has to be the 720 or the Artura, the new GT4 car, so the current models really, only because I literally was there from ground zero, from the very beginning. Even the boring stuff I quite enjoy, I won't admit it to engineers of course because you can't make yourself too accessible to these things all the time but the fact that you sit in these cars without a rollcage, then with a rollcage, then [engineers say things like] 'right Rob what button do you want there?'

"So in both instances, the 720 GT3 and Artura GT4, the latest car, they're the two cars that I've literally started from the beginning, first one to drive them, led the development and hopefully the results are great for the Artura going forward. We won our first British GT race [at the recent Silverstone 500 round] with the guys at Optimum, Charles Clark and Jack Brown, so that was brilliant for me to see, because it's something I've worked on from the start and it's winning races already. And that's what gives me the most kick and the biggest buzz is to see it come all the way through and have influence on how the cars are produced and built and handle and then people enjoying driving them and winning races.

"So those two, you asked for one but I'm giving you two. But that's the reason, it's the start-to-finish, not me alone of course, there's others had input whether they're engineers etc, but I've been in the thick of it from start to finish with both of those cars."

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Van Gisbergen (l) is the best driver Bell has gone racing with

MN: Silverstone must have been a good meeting for you, getting on the podium in GT3 yourself and Artura getting its first win in GT4?

RB: "Yeah I absolutely loved it. Of course I want to win every race I get in to but that's never going to happen. A podium is, especially with how the British GT field in both classes is this year, GT3 and GT4 is phenomenal, so to get any podiums this year is amazing and I stood up there and seeing the young lads coming through and winning that [in GT4] it was brilliant, absolutely brilliant, loved it."

Question: Who is the best ever co-driver you've had?
John Martin
Via email

RB: "Now that is a difficult one. A couple of years back one of your colleagues said to me when you're bored on a plane [work out] how many tracks have you been to. So I've added that up and I think it's 88 or 90. And he said what team-mates have you had as well? So I wrote them all down.

"And in GT racing from 2005 the bar starts pretty high: my first ever team-mate was Darren Turner in GT racing. Darren has just such a wealth of experience and he's such a quick peddler. And I'm now up to Mark Radcliffe in British GT, he's my 78th co-driver.

"So I've had a lot. To pick one would be difficult because some of the names, so many good names from Warren Hughes, Richard Dean, Allan Simonsen, Gimmi Bruni, all absolutely rock stars, Jaime Melo, Tim Sugden, Peter Kox, [Antonio] Garcia, I've been really really fortunate to drive with some amazing guys. Bruno Senna, Fred Makowiecki, Kevin Estre, Ben Barnicoat, absolute rock stars, Alvaro Parente I drove with him as well.

"But you've asked me so I'll give you a name. It's always one that you don't want to offend the people who you're not going to say, but the person who I think has got the most raw talent and natural ability I've potentially ever seen in a driver, and I've seen a lot, is Shane van Gisbergen. I'd say Shane because he came to Europe in 2014, we were driving in the 650 and he came over as a team-mate to do Spa 24 hours and at the time I'd never of him; he'd probably never heard of me.

"He didn't know any of the European tracks whatsoever, and he was a big bloke, six feet two, six feet three maybe, he's a big old bloke, he's quite thick set. When he first came over he was carrying a bit of weight as well, he probably won't mind me saying that, and you just looked at him and thought he's not a racing driver. And his ability just to jump in a car in any form, just like [you'd say] the seat's not quite right and he'd be like no it'll be alright, he just jumped in anything and went as quick as anyone could possibly go in that car.

"He was my co-driver when we won the Blancpain championship in 2016, him, me and Kevin Estre won races the year before in '15. Shane and I won four races out of 10 across the two seasons, and he also used to kiss my bald head for luck before races!

"And just when you see him jump in rally cars, Aussie V8s he's dominating really for the last five or six years from what I can see, I have no doubt if he got in a Formula 1 car he would be on the pace within 10 laps.

"And he's just such a quiet unassuming bloke but any time I saw him have 10 minutes spare in a weekend he'd have his head in data as well, so although it came to him so naturally he was still working hard and like I said I've had some absolutely outstanding team-mates who we could all match each other on pace, me included, but something about Shane meant he could just drive absolutely any car as fast as absolutely anyone within 10 minutes' notice. It's amazing really, and he'd probably drift it and do a doughnut at the finish after he's won, which is always fantastic, so I think Shane probably."

MN: Also you've raced with a lot of Am drivers, is there any particular Am driver that stood out for you over time?

RB: "I've driven with a few Ams, but I haven't driven with as many as you'd think because again my career took me to the factory driver element and I have done Le Mans in Pro-Am, but most of the time it's been Pro-Pro. So I've not driven with that many [Ams].

"But actually there's two that stand out. One: Shaun Balfe. I won GT Open with Shaun which was brilliant and we're very similar people in terms of our outlook on life and our attitude. We're into cycling, we cycle together reasonably regularly when we can, and I always thought Shaun's just a really good solid driver

> **"My biggest buzz is seeing a car go all the way to winning"**
>
> **Rob Bell**

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His single-seater climb got him to Formula Renault V6

in the car, didn't make many errors, was always very good over a stint and I always used to say on a test day if he got too close to me that's it, we'd box him [laughs], don't want him getting too close and which he did on occasion. So Shaun was really a class act.

"But I'd also say as a current driver my team-mate Mark Radcliffe. I've only done two [race meetings] with Mark, the testing we did pre-season was absolutely appalling for the weather, so we've done nothing really. And pre-season I thought oh there's something about you, you're quite handy. He's driven other brands prior to coming to us and modern GT cars have to be driven in a certain way so it's just getting Mark to drive it in the way that I want him to.

"But he's taken absolutely everything onboard and he's done everything I've asked of him so far and at Silverstone just gone as you said we had a podium and even that weekend was a washout at some points, but it was first time we had any dry running at all really and in the race I thought he was outstanding. And looking at his data after the race it's just coming together with Mark so I think Mark's got the potential to be a fantastic driver in his own right as he gets his head around these cars and I think we're just going to get stronger as the year goes on. So I'm really looking forward to finishing the year with Mark and maybe he could take the top spot of my Am drivers."

MN sets the scene: Bell driving alongside Balfe, as an early adopter of the then-new McLaren 720S GT3, finished third in 2019's British GT championship, just five points off the top. And they did this despite having to withdraw from the opening two races of the nine-race championship with electrical problems, then not scoring in race three after tangling with a backmarker.

Question: Do you consider the British GT championship in 2019 a championship you missed given you had to withdraw from the Oulton Park season-opener double header?

Callum Smith

Via email

RB: "That's a very good question. Well it definitely hurt us and we didn't realise how much it did hurt us until the last race. So the background to that was we missed the first Oulton Park race, it was the first year of the 720S GT3 car and Shaun was pretty much the first one to get one so it was all a little bit of a voyage into the unknown in that respect and we missed Oulton Park unfortunately which was a double header.

"And then at the last race at Donington, which we won, because the other championship contenders were failing in their mission as it were in that race, we were leading the championship with about 20 minutes to go. And then somebody overtook someone or something happened, I can't even remember who won the championship but whoever won it then it worked out well for them in the end. It was probably Jonny bloody Adam wasn't it?"

MN: Yeah it was.

RB: "So yeah as the year went through we didn't have any focus on the championship because we missed the first two rounds and it was only after the last one which we won convincingly, and actually that's one of the best Am stints I've ever seen, Shaun's first stint, he pulled out a gap and we won the race and it was only afterwards we were kicking ourselves.

"Look these things work out how they do and I'm not really one for looking back and saying ifs and buts. Did we miss it? No we didn't because we finished wherever we finished, second or third in the end, but there was a point in that race where we were leading it and what could have been, I'm not into what could have beens. We had a great year anyway, we enjoyed it, it was the first year of the car, and we won some races, so it was all happy days."

MN: Do you look back with pride as well because as you say you were an early adopter of the 720S that season, now there's loads of them out there?

RB: "Yeah absolutely, to win at Donington, which is a track I really enjoy, with Shaun in that car, that is one of my best moments."

MN: And how did the 720S develop during 2019?

RB: "McLaren changed internally, the old McLaren GT was outsourced and I don't know the politics of it and I never wanted to know but ultimately it changed and everything became in house and it became

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Andrew Kirkaldy was one of many influential bosses, and was vital to Bell getting his McLaren role

Bell was quickest on Goodwood hill

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Bell won 2017 GT Open title alongside "class act" Am driver Balfe

Bell was thrilled to see the McLaren Artura GT4 take early success

McLaren Motorsport as it is now.

"And their first task was to build the 720S GT3 which is a car to be raced worldwide, and big responsibility there and literally it all happened very very late on, everyone was up against it. When they made the decision I think they had three full-time staff, [it was] like alright let's go and build a GT3 car so [we had to] take a load of staff onboard, mid whatever year it was. The background is it was massively massively up against it with timescales and to build such a phenomenal car in the time we did that was a huge achievement to everyone involved.

"But of course when the car was first out at the beginning of that year, '19, there were things on it that weren't perfect, and we were still developing as we went on so it was only really mid to the end of '19 where we were getting our head around some of the things that had gone wrong and putting them right properly. So everything was evolving, but with any car you develop as a manufacturer, so the Artura for example or the new Evo kit we've done for GT3, you develop a car, you do everything you can to make it as reliable as you possibly can and as easy and accessible for all drivers, you can't just focus on a Pro driver, it has to be easy and enjoyable for everyone to drive so there's your first things you must do, and that's what we really focused on.

"And then once you hand them over to teams it's their responsibility to get the last tenths out of it and find the set-up that might suit them, and it's always an ongoing process. And then tyres change as years go on, it might be a Pirelli but it's a DHE, then it changes to a DHF, and then it will change again so there's always different characteristics. So actually you're always developing because the goal posts are constantly moving. And again that's a challenge for someone like me to be developing these cars and trying to stay one step ahead of the competition."

Question: What was been your best achievement with the McLaren brand? The 720S GT3X hillclimb win at Goodwood, Blancpain or ALMS title win with customer teams, the first British GT victory with 720S, or something else?
Andy Stevenson
Via email

RB: "That's a good question as well. My biggest career achievement was winning the what-was Blancpain Endurance championship, which is now GT World Challenge, so that was 2016 and that was in the 650S rather than 720, that's a very very special moment in my career. But I'm not sure it was the biggest for the brand actually.

"Biggest for the brand could potentially be the win at Goodwood [Festival of Speed in 2021]. Going into that event I'd never done it before as the timed hillclimb, I'd only ever driven it once or twice in a road car at 30mph and it was with our 720S or GT3X, which is a pretty special and unique car, it's awesome to drive.

"And turning up there is such a big event now and it's got a bit of kudos and [our appearance there] was [from] an amalgamation of Automotive and Motorsport McLaren, ultimately Automotive signed it off as this is a good thing for us to do and promote the brand. So it was promoting the whole company in that respect, and that was quite a big thing. So to win that promoting the whole company was probably my biggest thing within McLaren I would say."

MN: I take it the aftermath of the win and the response you got, that was really good?

RB: "Yeah it was and sometimes, maybe it's just me, but I think racing drivers in general we're so blinkered in doing just what we do, you're concentrating on the next race, the next customer, that is what we do and we don't often see the bigger picture. And Goodwood although I'd been to the event before I didn't really appreciate how big an event it was to the manufacturers until I was in that position.

"And when you're in that position and then afterwards you're getting so much response on social media and the internet and it's on YouTube with however-many views and loads of people commenting on it you then think oh it's quite an achievement that.

"I've done that a few times in my career. My first win in GT racing ever was my first-ever race, at the Nurburgring in an Aston Martin GT1 and going into that event I was blinkered into single-seaters and trying to get to Formula 1, I didn't know GT or sportscars even existed really, I mean I did but not really. So when I went and won that my career blew up from there, it absolutely made me. And this was the same, just went there no expectations, just we'll go and drive up the hill but actually in hindsight it's a massive achievement and something I'm really proud of."

Question: You have worked with some very well-known team bosses, such as Richard Dean, Richard Dutton and Martin Donnelly. Which is the team boss who has given you the best advice and what was it?
Emma Facey
Via email

RB: "Have they given me advice? Well in the early days people like Martin Donnelly and Richard Dean they probably gave me advice which I probably ignored because I was young and stupid [laughs], so yeah I probably owe them a lot of credit and that for the stuff I didn't take onboard unfortunately.

"Maybe [there's] not a piece of advice from any of them but what I would say being around people like that, from my [McLaren] boss now Ian Morgan, he has won four World championships, he was chief engineer at Red Bull Racing for when [Sebastian] Vettel won all his World championships, and he's never sat me down and said right here's a piece of information or a piece of advice for you, but just being around people like Ian, Richard Dean, the guys at Jota last year, Sam Hignett, he's a contemporary of mine, I raced against him in Formula Vauxhall Junior, but the way he looks at some things [is helpful].

"I've driven with some good guys in the States as well, Mr [Giuseppe] Risi in America I've driven with him, bosses like Cristiano Michelotto at Ferrari. I got on really well with the designer of Ferrari, Luigi Dindo's a pretty old established name in the engineering world.

"And actually just rubbing shoulders with all these people you just learn stuff from them. No-one's really ever sat me down and given me the talk about advice as a one-off but I certainly really look up to and respect people like Richard Dean who've been in my position as a driver and set up a team.

"And I remember, United [Autosports] now are a force to be reckoned with, are a fantastic team but I remember when they weren't, when they just started off, he was finding his feet in GT world and it's amazing to see these people come through.

"Andrew Kirkaldy was my team boss for a lot of years and he helped me out, he give me my first factory drives and I've learnt a lot off Andrew as well. I also worked with the late Dave Price [in Formula Renault V6] and I would often call him for advice. He probably helped me in my early GT years more than any other. He was a great guy.

"And to answer the question one thing I do appreciate from all those people [is] they've all stuck at it, they all just worked hard. [TF Sport boss] Tom Ferrier's another one, great example, someone just to work hard and apply themselves and I did his first Le Mans with him with Salih Yoluc and Euan Hankey and they've evolved since then.

"So we all just pass on information to each other and seeing people who are successful and tenacious and keep at it really that's probably the biggest thing I've learned, don't give up on things." ■

> **"Staying one step ahead is constant"**
> **Rob Bell**

He has high hopes for Radcliffe

McLaren work is never done...

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EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP: RALLY POLAND BY GRAHAM LISTER

MAY 19-21

Martins Sesks withstood the Polish pressure

Paddon kept up the point chase

PADDON'S PUSH FIRES UP WINNER SESKS ON POLAND'S EURO RALLY

For a fleeting moment Hayden Paddon had Martins Sesks on the defensive. He'd narrowed the Latvian's overnight lead to 7.4 seconds after winning Sunday's opening stage and appeared to be in the ascendancy as he hunted down his young rival.

But the New Zealander, a one-time WRC event winner, had paid the price for his early push as he completed the stage with a flat front-right Pirelli.

Having packed one spare only for the four-stage loop, Paddon was forced to switch from attack mode to follow the leader, wary that a second puncture would lead to retirement.

With the European championship title his sole focus, failing to go the distance simply wasn't an option for Paddon, whose decision to back off effectively left Sesks to pull clear and win largely as he pleased.

Of course, it wasn't as simple as all that and to suggest Paddon's drop in pace made the difference in Poland's lake district would be doing the 23-year-old Sesks a disservice, particularly when the morning stages were repeated in the afternoon and were badly rutted in places, increasing the puncture and accident risk considerably.

But Sesks isn't one to shout about his achievements in any case and spent the regroups working on his pacenotes rather than telling the assembled media why he was so fast in his MRF-equipped Skoda.

"It wasn't bad, still some things to work on but, in a way, it was fine," Sesks said. "Sometimes I was too fast; sometimes too slow. It's like when you dance and everything goes well. But it feels so good to be driving for such a good team with such a good car. Everyone wants to make a statement but in our minds, we want to keep our heads down and just do our work."

Paddon said: "We either kept pushing like we were doing but then you risk another puncture and you retire. When you're thinking about the championship and the points on offer it's about playing the smart game and that's the decision we had to make."

With Paddon settling for second, last year's winner Miko Marczyk completed the top three in a Michelin-shod Skoda to make it three tyre brands on the podium.

The home hero dropped time with a brief trip into a ditch on Saturday morning before a pop-off valve issue caused further frustration. But he responded on Sunday with a succession of top-three stage times take third.

"I am very happy because probably our pace was better than last year when we won the rally," said Marczyk. "If someone told me before the race I would finish between Hayden Paddon and Mads Ostberg I would say for sure it's perfect. But the best guy won the rally."

Josh McErlean was 1.5s ahead of Mads Ostberg in the battle for fourth only for a high-speed spin in a rutted stretch barely a mile from the start of SS13 to drop him to seventh. While the Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy driver deserved more after a strong display, he was content to have been on the pace from the outset.

Ostberg, meanwhile, was fastest on the event-deciding Powerstage on his way to fourth in his MRF-equipped Citroen.

Finnish champion Mikko Heikkila had been tipped as one of the favourites to win in Poland but languished in eighth place after spending much of Saturday having to "fight with the car". But set-up changes transformed his previous-specification Skoda and he finished fifth followed by Mathieu Franceschi, McErlean and Simone Tempestini.

European champion Efren Llarena never got to grips with his Fabia's handling, his efforts not helped by a poor qualifying stage time that left him running too far up the order to make an impression on the loose gravel. He completed the top 10 behind Erik Cais.

Andrea Mabellini was eighth when he went off the road into haybales on SS13 and rolled. He eventually regained the road but retired shortly afterwards.

Junior WRC champion Tom Kristensson retired after a torrid Saturday morning. Having changed a punctured tyre, the Swede's Citroen then got stuck in gear before contact with a rock broke his car's steering and put him out.

Osian Pryce was one place away from finishing in the points on his ERC debut. Unflustered by opening the road on leg one, the Welshman had to learn a new car, new stages and a co-driver in Stephane Prevot, a task made much harder by the fact he hadn't rallied since last October.

Jon Armstrong made it a hat-trick of ERC3 victories with Scottish champion Cameron Fair co-driving his M-Sport Poland-run Ford Fiesta Rally3, which needed a replacement left-rear tyre on SS7.

Paulo Soria gave Renault's Clio Rally3 its international debut. Having dropped out of contention with an early puncture, the Argentine crashed out on SS7.

RESULTS

European Rally Championship, round 3

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Martins Sesks/Renars Francis	Skoda Fabia Rally2	1h34m57.8s
2	Hayden Paddon/John Kennard	Hyundai i20 N Rally2	+39.6s
3	Miko Marczyk/Szymon Gospodarczyk	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+1m04.9s
4	Mads Ostberg/Patrik Barth	Citroen C3 Rally2	+1m12.9s
5	Mikko Heikkila/Samu Vaaleri	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+1m16.7s
6	Mathieu Franceschi/Jules Escartefigue	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+1m29.6s
7	Josh McErlean/John Rowan	Hyundai i20 N Rally2	+1m46.9s
8	Simone Tempestini/Sergiu Itu	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+2m09.2s
9	Erik Cais/Igor Bacigali	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+2m33.6s
10	Efren Llarena/Sara Fernandez	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+2m57.3s

ERC3: Jon Armstrong/Cameron Fair (Ford Fiesta Rally3 Evo) **ERC4/Junior ERC:** Ole Nore/Rune Eilertsen (Renault Clio Rally4) **Championship positions:** 1 Paddon 85; 2 Sesks 48; 3 Ostberg 48; 4 Bonato 47; 5 Llarena 41; 6 Marczyk 40; etc. **Next round:** Rally Liepaja, June 16-18

Armstrong kept up his winning habit in ERC3 in 2023

JUNIOR ERC

Raftery gained experience with Junior ERC miles

Norwegian would as Nore starts Junior ERC's 10th season with a win amid the sweet 16

The 10th Junior ERC season, and the first with Hankook as the official tyre supplier, began in Poland with 16 drivers taking part.

Six had championship experience but the rest were a mixture of rookies, ex-circuit racers and even a downhill skier.

Ole Nore, an underfunded Norwegian, took the win in his Renault Clio Rally4 with Norbert Maior from Romania one place behind in a Peugeot 208 as Victor Hansen from Sweden made it a Peugeot 2-3 followed by Roberto Dapra and Miko Jalava, the Finnish junior champion.

Timo Schulz should have been in the podium mix on the first of six prize drives for winning the ADAC Opel e-Rallye Cup in his native Germany last year.

But a big hit broke his Corsa's oil cooler. He restarted on Sunday but crashed on the Powerstage.

It was left to Max McRae to complete the top six (*see Rally News*) after the 18-year-old coped admirably with a succession of electrical issues.

Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy's Aoife Raftery moved into seventh in the closing stages after Matia Zanin's Peugeot developed an intercooler glitch.

Finishing seventh, the Galway resident got the vital experience she craved alongside Welsh co-driver Claire Williams.

Photos: James Roberts

SILVERSTONE GP: BRSCC C1 24 HOURS BY PETER SCHERER

MAY 20-21

TROJON WINS AFTER EMAX CLASH AND PENALTY

Trojon and Emax fought to the very end

Alastair Kellett won both of the safety car-interrupted Fiesta Silverstone races

After 24 hours of racing the dramatic C1 Endurance fight for victory went to the wire.

A clash between Emax Motorsport's Jake Little and Trojon Motorsport's Charlie Bingham a lap from home seemingly resolved the matter in Emax's favour. But Little, first home on the road, got a massive three-and-a-half-minute penalty post-race for causing a collision, handing victory to the Trojon effort of Bingham, Chris Freeman, Adam Willis and Jonathan and Austin Munday.

Little after his final stop with 13 minutes left rejoined with the lead but Bingham was right with him. They took Brooklands side by side with three laps to go and exiting Luffield Bingham got ahead. Little though stayed just inches behind and repeatedly showed his nose to his rival. A lap from home he dived down the inside at the Loop, they touched and Bingham spun. Little took the chequered flag first, but was penalised post hoc.

JW Bird Motorsport's entry of Matt Wilson, Philip House, Nick Beaumont and Tony Prendergast were classified second, while AB's Stuart Symonds unlapped himself to complete the podium alongside Oliver Allwood and Philip Ingram.

There was drama in the 24-hour contest right from the start via a terrific three-way battle with Scuderia Pollo Rosso's James Matthews, JWB's Wilson and Darke and Taylor's Tommy Field sharing the lead.

Three engine failures left Pollo Rosso sidelined, but Trojon's Freeman and Emax's Max Finn soon began to challenge and along with AB Motorsport, and the three efforts shared much of the leading. The Emax quartet of Jake and James Little, Stuart Ratcliff and Finn then started to take charge.

In the final hours Emax, AB and Trojon still contested first place, before AB picked up a penalty. Bingham led for Trojon until his final stop left him chasing Jake Little to regain the lead.

Alastair Kellett was the man to beat in the Fiesta ST240s and 150s races. In race one, after an early safety car intervention, Kellet stayed ahead of Albert Webster and Spencer Stevenson to win. The second race had barely two laps of green-flag action as the safety car intervened again and the race finished under caution. Kellett headed Webster and Stevenson once more.

Mike Jenvey's Jenvey Gunn outpaced the rest of Zeo Prototype field for a race-one victory. Ruben Stanislaus soon pulled clear of fellow Praga driver Rodolfo Gonzalez and closed on Jenvey for a while on the way to finishing second.

In race two Jonathan Mitchell's Revolution – fourth in race one – ousted Jenvey to lead from Copse on the opening lap. Within a couple of laps James Abbott's Revolution and Jessica Hawkins' Praga had got past Jenvey too. Both Abbott and Jenvey retired, leaving Mitchell to head home Hawkins.

RACE WINNERS

C1 Endurance Series
Trojon Motorsport (Chris Freeman, Jonathan Munday, Austin Munday, Adam Willis, Charlie Bingham)

Ford Fiesta ST240 & ST150 Challenge
Races 1 & 2: Alistair Kellett (Fiesta ST240)

Zeo Sports Prototype
Race 1: Mike Jenvey (Jenvey Gunn);
Race 2: Jonathan Mitchell (Revolution)

Supersport Endurance Cup
Leon Bidgway (Lotus Exige)

Photo: Graham Holbon

PEMBREY: BARC BY CHRIS ASHBY

MAY 20-21

MIXED FORTUNE FOR TRUCK CHAMPION SMITH

Ryan Smith endured a weekend of two halves in the British Truck Racing Championship at Pembrey last weekend with a hat-trick of commanding race wins offset by damage and mechanical issues hampering him in the remaining two contests.

Headlining the British Automobile Racing Club's Convoy Cymru meeting in south Wales, the titans of truck racing basked in the weekend-long sunshine as they served up a quintet of action-packed contests.

Reigning seven-time Division 1 champion Smith proved to be the driver to beat on Saturday as he was wheel-perfect on his way to pole position and two wins in his Daimler Freightliner.

The Mansfield-based racer then produced a vintage charge to the front in race three as he clinched victory from starting eighth, however that was to be as good as it got as he tallied low scores in races four and five, which were won by Jock Borthwick and Michael Oliver respectively.

In Division 2, the trio of Adam Bint, Paul Rivett and John Powell staked their claims as title contenders as they shared class spoils – with Bint and Rivett taking a brace of victories apiece.

One of the closest finishes over the weekend came in the 100-minute 2CV/Mini Endurance bout. Following a frenetic 67-lap duel, the Baycon Racing team of Sandro and Luca Proietti pipped Pete Sparrow and Nick Crispin to victory by half a second.

Crispin, despite losing out in the two-driver endurance race, did stand on the top step of the podium as he triumphed in one of two Classic 2CV Racing Club races. After blasting to pole position, last year's runner-up charged to victory in race one before Kris Tovey came to the fore to win in race two.

Daire Flock and Oskar Dix maintained their strong starts to the Junior Saloon Car Championship season by adding to their win tallies, Flock doing so on two occasions. The experience of the second-year drivers shone through in the junior single-make series across a truncated two days wherein a handful of red flags interrupted proceedings.

Two races from the Track Attack Race Club the Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship rounded out the weekend's action. The Track Attack races were won by Lee Currie and Adam Croft while Wayne Spiller and Damian Longotano triumphed in the Welsh contest.

Three out of five ain't bad for seven-time champ Smith

RACE WINNERS

British Truck Racing Championship – Division 1
Races 1, 2 & 3: Ryan Smith;
Race 4: Jock Borthwick;
Race 5: Michael Oliver

British Truck Racing Championship – Division 2
Races 1 & 2: Adam Bint;
Race 3: John Powell;
Races 4 & 5: Paul Rivett

2CV championship
Race 1: Nick Crispin;
Race 2: Kris Tovey

Junior Saloon Car Championship
Races 1 & 2: Daire Flock;
Race 3: Oskar Dix

Track Attack Race Club
Race 1: Lee Currie;
Race 2: Adam Croft

Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship
Race 1: Wayne Spiller;
Race 2: Damian Longatano

2CV/Mini Endurance
Sandro Proietti/Luca Proietti

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Steve Jones

BRANDS HATCH: 750MC BY MARCUS PYE

MAY 20-21

Gadd outran Gore two times out of three

Woodward (87) missed 116 Trophy honours but bagged two sprint wins

GADD'S DOUBLE PUTS HIM TOP OF THE TREE

A double victory and a third place catapulted Tom Gadd above race one-winner Dan Gore to the top of the F1000 championship table as erstwhile leader Rob Welham endured a pointless first two races at Brands Hatch, with a bent valve in the opener precluding his race-two start.

Fastest lap in the reversed top 10 second race earned Gadd pole for Sunday's race three, which he won from Gore, while race-one runner-up Matt Higginson finished third chasing race-two spinner Gore and reduced James McLachlan's 2014 lap record to 44.67 seconds.

An engine change by the factory Jedi team enabled Welham to salvage sixth on Sunday, behind Murfie Aldridge, who merited his third-straight fourth place, and Formula Vee champion Craig Pollard who chased Gadd home second time out.

Three-time champion Martin Farmer broke a two-year layoff with Formula Vee double race victory. AHS Dominator pilots bagged silvers, Craig Bell on Saturday and impressive teenager Matthew Hyde on Sunday, both 0.10s shy of victory. Elliot Mason maxed his elderly Sheane to complete the first podium. Veteran Tim Probert (Storm) claimed third on Sunday.

Ryan Polley extended his Hot Hatch run to four wins in his Honda Civic EP3, outrunning Dan Silvester's lighter EK2 and Philip Wright's EP3. Tight Class B and C wins were shared by Mathew Mandipira and Joel Arguelles (Renault Clio 197s) and Callum Perfect (BMW 318ti) and Martyn Paget (Citroen Saxo).

Type R Trophy honours went to Joe Jessup and 2015 Formula Fordster Miles Nathaniel-James, the latter belying his lack of recent racing miles. Jason Pelosi and Jack Dwane were the Clio Sport winners, either narrowly defeating Ben Swift.

Stewart Place completed a Classic Stock Hatch win hat-trick on Saturday, following his Silverstone double, but the extra 25kg success ballast favoured fellow Peugeot 205 pedaller Chris Dear on Sunday. Behind James Haslehurst's Pug, Martin Cayzer (Ford XR2i) and the persistent Ben Bateman (Vauxhall Nova GTE) led the interlopers.

Will Abraham (20) and Mack Priestwood (17) brilliantly saw off Louis Woodward in Sunday's frantic 90-minute 116 Trophy race, as Nigel Greensall set fastest lap finishing David Hudson's BMW. Woodward won both Saturday sprints in his 120i, one of four racing the hatchback.

Shaun Traynor beat Graham Malings to both MR2 chequers, then was excluded from the latter for a technical infringement. Billy Boggis nicked Mk2 gold from Dan Silvester on the line first time out, but Silvester retaliated later.

Both 750 Formula events had double winners. John Village topped the Historics in his V2, despite its gear lever detaching in race two, when clear of Tim Sage's fast Mallock which broke. Among the 'modern' champions, Bill Cowley – in the Cowley MkIV originated by grandfather Bill – battled to overcome Peter Bove (Darvi) and Mark Glover (Racekits Falcon).

RACE WINNERS

Formula Vee
Races 1 & 2: Martin Farmer (GAC)

F1000
Race 1: Dan Gore (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6/7);
Races 2 & 3: Tom Gadd (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6/7)

Type R Trophy
Race 1: Joe Jessup (Honda Civic EP3);
Race 2: Miles Nathaniel-James (Honda Civic EP3)

Clio Sport
Race 1: Jason Pelosi (Renault Clio 197);
Race 2: Jack Dwane (Renault Clio 197)

Hot Hatch
Races 1 & 2: Ryan Polley (Honda Civic EP3 Type R)

116 Trophy
Will Abraham (BMW 116i)

116 Sprint & 120 Coupe Cup
Races 1 & 2: Louis Woodward (BMW 120i)

Classic Stock Hatch
Race 1: Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTi);
Race 2: Chris Dear (Peugeot 205 GTi)

Toyota MR2
Race 1: Shaun Traynor (Roadster);
Race 2: Graham Malings (Roadster)

Historic 750 Formula
Races 1 & 2: John Village (Village V2)

750 Formula
Races 1 & 2: Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV))

MALLORY PARK: BARC/CMMC BY RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

MAY 20-21

TUCKER AND AMES MOVE LATE FOR FORD WINS

Super Classic Formula Ford slipstreaming action gave us the closest finishes at Mallory Park last weekend with James Tucker's Swift and Alex Ames in a Van Diemen taking a win apiece. Both made good late moves at the Hairpin to hit the front at the key time, with Ames's race-two last-lap shot round the outside of a decelerating Tucker being the most spectacular.

Eike Wellhausen's Lister Knobbly was also spectacular in winning both Classic Challenge races. He was challenged particularly strongly in race two by Rupert West's Ford Mustang after starting badly, but Wellhausen left West behind once he got back to the front. David Moorhouse was second in race one in a Mini after West spun at Gerard's. Moorhouse was also third in race two.

Matty Cobb's Beetle prototype was similarly dominant in both Northern Saloon and Sports Car races, although there was plenty of catch-up antics. An engine cut-out in race one dropped Paul Rankin's Westfield Aero to sixth, but he fought back to second. Colin Simpson (Marcos Mantis) did even better in race two, finishing second after starting from the back due to a race-one DNF.

The Mini Challenge's first winner played catch-up from midfield: Stephen Berry's Class O car overcame the Class S cars in race one and won convincingly, although he could not catch Zac Blackwell in race two.

The Silhouette action was just getting going in race one when Colin Smith (Ginetta) crashed after blowing an engine, forcing a red flag. Winner Ian Hales was already on a charge in his Vauxhall Tigra and took the win. His fellow Tigra driver Paul Knight won race two from fifth on a reversed grid, having been close behind Hales in race one.

There was more front-row competition came in the three Pickup races, held on the oval track. Regular frontrunners Dale Gent and Reece Jones took a close-fought win apiece and Jones would have had two, had he not been penalised for jumping the start in race two, dropping him to sixth. Allen Cooper, who had been pressuring him all race and led briefly, was awarded the victory.

Rod Birley won the first Super Saloons race from pole in his BMW, although he was being caught by Adrian Bradley's BMW towards the end. Steve Rothery (Peugeot 308) was third, after starting at the back. Race two was cancelled after a crash in the second Tin Tops race caused timetable problems, as there was insufficient ambulance support.

Ames (21) and Tucker (555) thrilled in Pre-'99 Formula Ford

RACE WINNERS

Mini Challenge Clubsport
Race 1: Stephen Berry (Mini Cooper S);
Race 2: Zac Blackwell (Mini Cooper S)

CMMCS Tin Tops
Races 1 & 2: Chris Bassett (Peugeot 306 GTi)

Pickup Truck Racing Championship
Race 1: Dale Gent;
Race 2: Allen Cooper;
Race 3: Reece Jones

CMMC Super Saloons Series
Race 1: Rod Birley (BMW M3 E36);
Race 2: cancelled

Super Classic Pre-'99 Formula Ford Championship
Race 1: James Tucker (Swift SE92);
Race 2: Alex Ames (Van Diemen)

Northern Saloon and Sports Car Championship
Races 1 & 2: Matty Cobb (VW Beetle)

CMMC Intermarque Silhouette Series
Race 1: Ian Hales (Vauxhall Tigra);
Race 2: Paul Knight (Vauxhall Tigra)

CMMC Classic Challenge
Races 1 & 2: Eike Wellhausen (Lister Knobbly)

Photos: Mick Walker

CROFT: BARC BY JOE HUDSON

MAY 20-21

LOWER AND CHIDDICKS HIGH ON THRILLS

Lower and Chiddicks starred in the Caterham 270R contests, Chiddick hitting back after Lower's win double

Charlie Lower and Freddie Chiddicks put on a trio of thrilling races as the Caterham 270R championship demonstrated the power of the tow on Croft's long straights.

Lower, set up by snatching pole by 0.017 seconds, had the measure of Chiddicks in the first two encounters – aided by a backmarker obstructing Chiddicks in the opener. But in the third race Chiddicks hit back in style.

Always stronger on the run down to Tower – something Lower put down to setting up his machine to be focused on the twisty final sector – Chiddicks defended solidly into Lower's favoured overtaking spot at the Complex to seal race-three glory by one-tenth of a second.

Jack Sales took a hat-trick in the 310Rs, but didn't make it easy for himself. Qualifying sixth meant a charge up to the lead, eventually denying Lars Hoffman with a superb lunge at Tower in the opener. Then, having taken race-two glory at a canter, a string of poor laps in the third race meant Sales had to battle back from fifth to ensure his triple success.

Three wins were the order of the day for Lewis Thompson in the Seven championship, who continued his 100% start to the season. Despite competition from James Murphy and Stephen Lyall, Thompson proved too strong on the brakes – especially into Tower – and made it five victories from five races.

Ending up in the farmer's field proved to be the key to Ben Timmons' double win in Roadsport. Having practiced how late he could brake into Tower during testing – and finding the limit in spectacular fashion – Timmons in race one made amends for losing the lead after missing a gear coming out of the Hairpin, by outbraking Toby Ballard to take the spoils. A squabbling battle for second place allowed Timmons a more comfortable run to the flag in the second race, he won by eight seconds.

Suspected turbo failure denied Simon Vercoe a brace in the combined Production GTI/Z Cars races. Having strolled to victory in the first race, he was on course to claim a hard-fought win in the second before the turbo gave up in a cloud of smoke just two laps from the end, handing Ryan Sayer glory. Edd Giddings took a Z Cars double on the championship's North Yorkshire debut.

Brothers Jamie and Craig Blake shared the Scottish Mini Cooper spoils in the Cooper S category. In the Cooper category, Oly Mortimer took the flag in the opener before a race-two collision as he battled with Ian Munro allowed Jason Ballantyne the unlikeliest of successes as he charged from the back of the grid to take victory.

Maiden Caterham Academy wins went the way of Daniel Neale and Jonathan Emery.

RACE WINNERS

Caterham Seven championship
Races 1, 2 & 3: Lewis Thompson

Caterham Seven 270R
Races 1 & 2: Charlie Lower; **Race 3:** Freddie Chiddicks

Caterham Seven 310R
Races 1, 2 & 3: Jack Sales

Caterham Roadsport
Races 1 & 2: Ben Timmons

Scottish Mini Cooper Cup
Race 1: Jamie Blake (Cooper S); **Race 2:** Craig Blake (Cooper S)

Z Cars & Production GTI
Race 1: Simon Vercoe (Golf); **Race 2:** Ryan Sayer (Golf)

Caterham Academy – White
Daniel Neale

Caterham Academy – Green
Jonathan Emery

Sales (leading) had to overcome adversity to claim a hat-trick of 310R wins

Photo: Gary Hawkins

ANGLESEY: MSVR BY PETER RICHINGS

MAY 20-21

There was no stopping Clarke in perfect Wales weekend

CLARKE'S FOUR-STAR CLUBMANS WEEKEND

James Clarke set a blistering pace during the weekend of Clubmans Sports Prototype races at Anglesey, setting the perfect score of pole, four race wins and a new lap record in the 'works' Phantom PR22 under blue skies and uninterrupted sun on the category's first visit to the circuit in five years.

He was pursued in each race by the similar car of Cody Tree, who despite his best efforts and set-up changes could not keep Clarke in sight although Tree was unchallenged in second. Tom Bellamy's GEM and Steve Collier (Vision V89) spent the weekend locked in combat for the final podium position, but Collier could never find a chink in Bellamy's armour.

In the Clubmans CSP2 class Clarke's stablemate Matthieu Gauthier-Thornton was almost as dominant taking pole and all four wins but perennial runner-up Will Freeman, driving his father's unique Ardmore, nicked the fastest lap in race four to continue his fine form from last month's Silverstone season opener that he took part in as a complete novice.

Tom Muirhead was the star of Clubmans' CSPB class, taking three wins, but blotted his copy book in race three of four by spinning twice and this allowed Pippa Tanner-Wood through to victory. Tanner-Wood chased him hard in the final race to keep him honest for the win and took fastest lap in three of the races.

In the Porsche Club championship Henry Mailer took a brace of wins in his Cayman. The first race had been red flagged after a huge blow up on Richard Bayston's 996 resulted in an oil slick coating the track all around The Banking needing an urgent clean up. In the second race Mailer was pursued to the line by Steve Wood and Mark McAleer.

Jonathan Lovell won both races for the Porsche Boxster Cup, the first relatively easily but he was made to work throughout by Sarah Thomson in the second encounter. The pair went into the final lap extremely close and Thomson made a great attempt to strike into the Rocket only to lose control and spin sideways. Fortunately they were far enough ahead of the rest so she could re-join and keep second place at the flag.

Declan Lee and John Langridge took a Miata Cup win apiece after close races, while the Trackday Trophy wins went to Paul McHugh/William Heslop (Honda Civic Type R) and Mick Presland (Lotus Elise S2).

RACE WINNERS

Clubmans Sports Prototype
Races 1, 2, 3 & 4: James Clarke (Phantom)

Porsche Club Championship
Races 1 & 2: Harry Mailer (Cayman)

Porsche Boxster Cup
Races 1 & 2: Jonathan Lovell (Boxster S)

Miata Trophy
Race 1: Declan Lee (Mazda); **Race 2:** John Langridge (Mazda)

MSVT Trackday Trophy
Paul McHugh/William Heslop (Honda Civic Type R)

MSVT Trackday Championship
Mick Presland (Lotus Elise S2)

Porsche Open Cup
Races 1 & 2: Archie Hamilton (Porsche 911)

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Ben Lawrence

PLAINS RALLY: BRITISH HISTORIC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP BY PAUL LAWRENCE

MAY 20

Tuthill rolled back the years to win

McCormack felt second was "as good as a win"

TUTHILL PIPS McCORMACK AFTER EPIC BATTLE ON THE PLAINS

Richard Tuthill and Dale Furniss put a Porsche back on top in the British Historic Rally Championship after a glorious day of rallying on the Plains Rally.

After eight fast, dusty and tough stages in North Wales, Tuthill won by just two seconds after a battle with the Ford Escort Mk2 of Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell that was as sporting as it was ferocious.

On a day when several frontrunners failed to finish, including early championship leaders Roger Chilman and Patrick Walsh, it was Tom Walster and Andrew Roughead who headed the chase of the lead battle while Nick Elliott and Dave Price made it three different cars in the top four after a strong run in the Fiat 131.

The opening stage in Alwen South set the tone for the day as McCormack took two seconds out of Tuthill. Adrian Hetherington and Ronan O'Neill were second-fastest historics through the stage. Sadly on the second run of the stage in the afternoon, they put their Ford Escort Mk2 off on a fast right-hander near the finish and retired.

It was all square in Alwen North before the action moved to the Aberhirnant complex close to the rally base in Bala. Unfortunately, the first run through the nine-mile Aberhirnant stage was lost to the leading crews after a couple of earlier incidents. The leaders then went across the road into Llangower where Tuthill pulled three seconds back to lead McCormack into midday service by a single second.

McCormack hung it all out in Alwen South after lunch to pull a second back and level the score but in Alwen North Tuthill admitted to over-driving the 911 and dropped five seconds to McCormack. Tuthill then dug deep and clawed those five back in Aberhirnant to make it all level going into the final 3.3 miles in Llangower. Both attacked but it was the Porsche that grabbed a two second margin to win after a glorious contest. It was the first BHRC win for a Porsche for more than a decade.

It was a contest that wound the clock back 16 years to the 2007 Manx Rally when they fought a mighty battle across the opening day. Tuthill said: "The 2007 Manx was one of the greatest days of rallying I ever did and if Marty had beaten me today I'd have been just as happy. He's an absolute legend! It's been a great day. Fantastic weather and great organisation."

McCormack and Mitchell were the first to congratulate their rivals. "What a day! The last couple of stages were very loose and probably didn't suit us, but what a day's racing. I said after the first stage: 'this is why we come to Wales to go rallying'," said McCormack. "We're more than pleased to come back second. To finish second to Richard is as good as winning it."

While the wonderful lead contest grabbed the attention, the battle for third was just as competitive with four crews in contention. Walster and Roughead eventually emerged to take the place after resolving a query over a road penalty. "That's very good for my first event with Andrew," said Walster who had a big scare when he misheard a note: "He said nine and I heard five," admitted Walster.

Out of the battle with a final-stage accident went Chilman and it was Elliott who took the Fiat into fourth, eight seconds down on Walster and just four up on Richard Jordan and James Gratton-Smith. Seb Perez and Gary McElhinney rounded out the top six after a last-minute change to the Escort Mk2, destined for Seb's father Steve, after their Porsche 911 hit engine issues during a test on Friday.

A place in the final overall historic top 10 and a commanding Category 2 victory was just reward for Josh Carr and Richard Wardle in their Pinto-powered Ford Escort Mk1. They were on it from the start and humbled a number of more powerful cars with a charging performance. After a hot and dusty day at the office, Carr said: "We've earned that. We've made it in one piece and we didn't crash" referencing that he'd finished Rally North Wales with damage to the front right of the Escort.

Mark and Debora Tugwell were best of the 1600cc Category 2 cars, while the evergreen Jeremy Easson and Mike Reynolds headed the BDA-powered Mk1s. Back in his Ford Escort Mk2 while planning a re-fettle of his Opel Manta, David Dobson took Class D3 with Brian Hodgson alongside after another strong performance.

RESULTS

British Historic Rally Championship, round 3

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Richard Tuthill/Dale Furness	Porsche 911	44m13s
2	Martin McCormack/Barney Mitchell	Ford Escort Mk2	+2s
3	Tom Walster/Andrew Roughead	Ford Escort Mk2	+30s
4	Nick Elliott/Dave Price	Fiat 131	+38s
5	Richard Jordan/James Gratton-Smith	Ford Escort Mk2	+42s
6	Seb Perez/Gary McElhinney	Ford Escort Mk2	+58s
7	Michael McDaid/Declan Casey	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m44s
8	Rudi Lancaster/Guy Weaver	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m12s
9	Baz Jordan/Arwel Jenkins	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m53s
10	Josh Carr/Richard Wardle	Ford Escort Mk1	+3m27s

Class winners: Mark Tugwell/Debora Tugwell (Ford Escort Mk1); Carr/Wardle; Jeremy Easson/Mike Reynolds (Ford Escort Mk1); David Dobson/Brian Hodgson (Ford Escort Mk2); McCormack/Mitchell; Elliott/Price; Freddy Camp/Stephen Spear (Ford Escort Mk1)

The Category 2 spoils were earned by Josh Carr's Mk1

MODERN EVENT

Ford Fiesta Rally2 battler Williams claims first overall win on return to UK rallying

Williams heralded his UK return with a classy victory

Three crews stood out at the top of the modern rally, and it was Tom Williams and Ross Whittock who made a triumphant return to UK rallying to win in their Ford Fiesta Rally2.

In a break from his North America campaign, Williams delivered a great performance on his first UK rally for several years to score his first overall victory. Matthew Hirst and Mark Glennerster finished second, 27 seconds adrift, and were left to rue another power-steering problem, the third in five events this year. The power-steering packed up in the second run of Alwen North and they lost at least half a minute battling through the stage. They were able to reset it on the next road section following but the damage had been done.

Meanwhile, Perry Gardener and Jack Bowen made a strong return after a seven-month sabbatical with their Fiesta R5. They had a problem when an alarm on the dash in stage eight cost them half a minute while trying to rectify the problem.

Behind the big three, Simon Rogers and James How took their Mitsubishi Lancer E6 into fourth place, while notable class winners included Bradley Howlett and Nick Vandevenne, who pushed their Peugeot 208 R2 to seventh overall as the leading two-wheel-drive car.

Iwan Roberts and Daniel Jones were spectacular as ever in their class-winning Ford Escort G3 and Dan and Cyril Jones took their class in the hard-charging Vauxhall Nova. Finally Mick Smith and Paul Stringer topped the Mini Challenge runners who contested the first half of the rally.

Results

1 Tom Williams/Ross Whittock (Ford Fiesta Rally2) 41m33s; 2 Matthew Hirst/Mark Glennerster (Ford Fiesta R5) +27s; 3 Perry Gardener/Jack Bowen (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Simon Rogers/James How (Mitsubishi Lancer E6); 5 Peter Bayliss/Paul Godden (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 6 Martyn Andrews/Steve Greenhill (Subaru Impreza); 7 Bradley Howlett/Nick Vandevenne (Peugeot 208 R2); 8 Daniel Moss/Samuel Davies (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); 9 Steve Hollis/Tim Currie (VW Golf R); 10 Paul Walker/Geraint Thomas (Subaru Impreza). **Class winners:** Gethin Price/Stephen Brown (Nissan Micra); Howlett/Vandevenne; Julian Birley/Emyr Hall (Talbot Sunbeam); Graham Palmer/Mike Webb (Ford Escort Mk1); Jeremy Wells/Martin Saunders (Ford Escort Mk1); Lyn Davies/Aled Richards (Ford Escort Mk2); Dan Jones/Cyril Jones (Vauxhall Nova); Iwan Roberts/Daniel Jones (Ford Escort G3); Andrew Fox/Jaime Lee-Fox (BMW 325i); Rogers/How; Mick Smith/Paul Stringer (BMW Mini Cooper S).

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Brackley-based team plots evolution to regain lost ground to Red Bull and Ferrari

MERCEDES AIMS TO BOUNCE BACK BY STICKING TO DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Wraps came off the new Mercedes W14 racer

By Matt James

Lewis Hamilton

Mercedes F1 bosses say the team's new W14 design has ironed out the flaws from its 2022 challenger and will give drivers Lewis Hamilton and George Russell the chance to fight for grand prix wins.

The team slipped to third in the constructors' chase last year after eight straight constructors' titles. The 2022 W13 was prone to bouncing in the early part of the campaign but work by engineers ironed out the phenomenon by the end of the campaign.

Now the new W14 has taken design philosophies from the previous machine and team chiefs say it will be a step forward.

Technical director Mike Elliott said: "At times last year, we were questioning ourselves and saying: 'Do we have to tear it all up and start again?' But you know if you do that, you are going to go backwards. Although we had problems last year, we know there is a lot of goodness in the car.

"We've looked at the problems we had last year and how best to ensure we solved them."

Full story, page 4

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PREVIEW

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We look ahead to the historic showpiece, p14

INTERVIEW

READERS' Q&A JULIAN PORT

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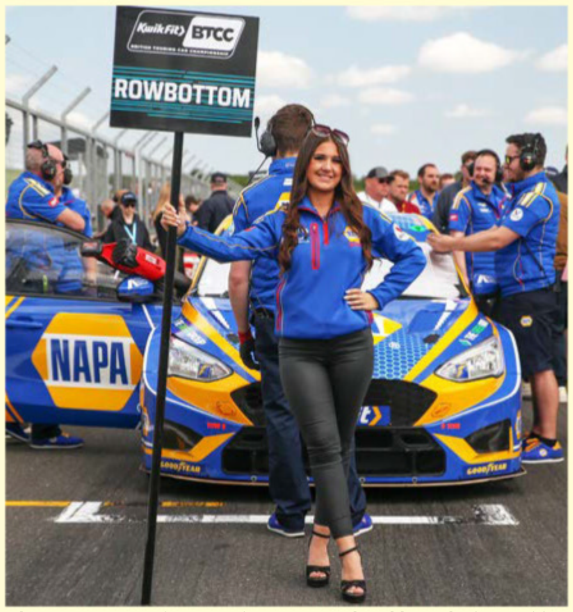
COLUMNIST

DAN ROWBOTTOM

MN's man in the NAPA Racing UK BTCC hot seat gets back to form at Snetterton

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Rowbottom was back to the front



The NAPA Racing UK team worked hard at Snett

Well, that was a bit more like it! After a difficult start to the season, Snetterton was kinder to us than previous venues, although in achieving my best result of the season it meant exclusion for one of my NAPA Racing UK team-mates.

After Brands Hatch, I'd been struggling a bit. Firstly, I was quite sore after the accident in race one in Kent and I think it was adrenalin that kept me going for that afternoon two weeks ago, but then I ached for a few days. Once the soreness went away, I caught some bug and felt awful, even spending a day in bed. So, I wasn't sure what to expect at Snetterton although a long bike ride with TOCA co-ordinator Dan Mayo helped the fitness a bit.

With three tyre compounds to run on Sunday – the soft, medium and hard Goodyears – we did quite a lot of housekeeping on Saturday to make sure we had a scrubbed set of each ready for race day and then came qualifying. I was pretty confident that I could be up at the sharp end of the grid but it never quite clicked for me. Actually, I was feeling really bad with a banging migraine just before qualifying and then on my last run I was two-and-a-half tenths up, but it felt like I had fuel surge so rather than run dry, I abandoned the lap. I reckon I could, and should, have been higher up than ninth. Fifth place was on I think.

For race one, we ran the hard tyre and it was a good decision. It was made in consultation with team-mate Ash [Sutton], who said if he were me would run the hard tyre, so I trusted a three-time title winner.

The car felt really good and we had data from the other cars to shape our decision for races two and three on which tyre to use when. Actually, race one wasn't the best race for me in terms of battling because I was the best of the rest behind the soft- and medium-shod cars. Someone said I was in No-Man's Land and in a way it was true: I wasn't catching those ahead and I wasn't really being caught but that was all that tyre would allow, so I stuck at the pace and took seventh place, the best of those on hard tyres.

Race two on the softs was strong for my Cataclean-backed Ford Focus and I made progress up to fourth which was good. I was closing on the BMWs at the end but needed another lap I guess. The soft tyre surprised any of use by lasting a full race but the idea of all three compounds in a day is one I like.

Race three should have been better. I don't think we got the tyre pressures quite right so it took about three laps for the car to really come alive and before that I couldn't hold a candle to [Tom] Ingram. I knew team-mate Dan [Cammish] was closing on me and I let him by.

Tyre choices were a journey during the weekend

It was my choice, not the team's, because I could see he was closing and was faster so there wasn't much point in fighting and spoiling both our races. We found a sweet spot in the car but not a front end that clicked instantly.

That said, it's been a good weekend compared to the previous two and then just when I was thinking that fourth wasn't too bad, poor Cammish was excluded for failing the rideheight check which gave me third. I'm happy to gain a place but I wish it hadn't been one of our cars that had the issue. The rideheight failure is a bit of a mystery but I am sure the NAPA Racing UK guys will work out what happened. It's odd, though, because the problem only occurred in the centre of the car not the sides.

So we had wins and podiums this weekend as a team and I am happy with what we achieved. I also have to mention my team manager Malcolm Swetnam who was very brave having his shoulder put back in place in A&E on Saturday night. Malcolm – don't tell anyone – tripped over the anti-trip thing in the paddock and hurt his shoulder but he was back at the track Sunday morning, arm in a sling, as if nothing had happened.

A couple of minor tweaks to the car and we should be in the fight. We are off to Thruxton next, where I have had a pole before, so I am pretty confident for the next event.

"Just when I thought fourth position was OK, I gained a place after the race"

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WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE REVIEW

'Three-abreast at Spa' for most brings to mind Mika Hakkinen, Michael Schumacher and Ricardo Zonta. But British GT has its own version, and with the added claim to fame that its three-wide bottom-clenching moment happened in the plunge to Spa's legendary Eau Rouge.

It involved the MN readers' Q&A guest Rob Bell. The closest analogy is that he was the Schumacher of the piece.

As the minutes ticked down towards the end of British GT's 2019 Spa race, third-placed Bell in his Balfe McLaren 720S closed in on then hounded second-placed Glynn Geddie's Team Parker Bentley. But while they scrapped Callum MacLeod's RAM Mercedes closed in on both of them.

It all came to a head at Eau Rouge as mentioned and, rather than rely on my prose seeking to do it justice, SRO's YouTube channel has footage of what happened.

You can have a watch here: youtube.com/watch?v=PxEy84RxVbc.

Graham Keilloh

Bell was a Spa turn

TV GUIDE

This weekend is the annual high point for world motorsport with two blue-riband events on Sunday: the Monaco Grand Prix and Indianapolis 500.

For Formula 1's Monegasque round-the-houses event, Channel 4's qualifying highlights are on Saturday at 1930hrs-2100hrs while its race highlights are at 1830hrs-2100hrs on Sunday.

Sky Sports F1's Monaco weekend-preview F1 Show is on first at 1730hrs-1830hrs on Friday, and that's also on Sky Sports Main Event. Ted Kravitz's Notebook report for qualifying is shown first at 1645hrs-1715hrs on Saturday on Sky's F1 channel while his race rundown premieres at 1700hrs-1730hrs on Sunday.

There are several chances this week, starting at 1220hrs-1250hrs today on Sky Sports F1, to watch highlights of last weekend's F1 Academy gathering at Barcelona.

You can also on Viaplay Xtra catch this weekend's DTM season-opener action from Oschersleben. Race one is on at 1630hrs-1815hrs on Saturday and race two's coverage is on Sunday from 2330hrs-0115hrs.

LIVE TV

Formula 1
Monaco Grand Prix
Practice 1: Friday, 1200hrs-1400hrs, Sky Sports F1; Sky Sports Main Event
Practice 2: Friday, 1545hrs-1730hrs, Sky Sports F1; Sky Sports Main Event
Practice 3: Saturday, 1115hrs-1240hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Saturday, 1430hrs-1645hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race: Sunday, 1230hrs-1700hrs (start time 1400hrs), Sky Sports F1; 1230hrs-1600hrs, Sky Sports Main Event

FIA Formula 2
Monaco
Practice: Thursday, 1255hrs-1350hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Friday, 1405hrs-1500hrs, Sky Sports F1; Sky Sports Main Event
Sprint race: Saturday, 1330hrs-1430hrs, Sky Sports F1
Feature race: Sunday, 0845hrs-1000hrs, Sky Sports F1

FIA Formula 3
Monaco
Practice: Thursday, 1125hrs-1220hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Friday, 1005hrs-1055hrs, Sky Sports F1
Sprint race: Saturday, 0955hrs-1050hrs, Sky Sports F1
Feature race: Sunday, 0715hrs-0815hrs, Sky Sports F1

Porsche Supercup
Monaco
Race: Sunday, 1050hrs-1135hrs, Sky Sports F1

IndyCar
Indianapolis 500
Pitstop competition: Friday, 1930hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race: Sunday, 1530hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports Arena; 1730hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports F1; 1930hrs-2100hrs, Sky Sports Main Event

NASCAR
Charlotte
Race: Sunday, 2230hrs-0330hrs, Viaplay Sports 2

LISTINGS

RACING
SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park Intl, Cheshire**
BARC meeting: Britcar Trophy, British Endurance **Starts** racing from 1130hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0344 225 4422

■ **Kirkistown, N Ireland**
500MRCI meeting: Scottish Fiesta ST, FF1600, Road Sports, Ford Fiestas, Saloons and GTs, Mazda MX-5s, 7evens Series **Starts** racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £15 kirkistown.com

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Donington Park GP, Leics**
British GT meeting: British GT, GB4, Ginetta Junior, Ginetta GT, Ginetta GT Academy **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1440hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) Sunday, racing from 0910hrs **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0344 225 4422

■ **Silverstone GP, Northants**
HSCC International Trophy: Historic F2, Monoposto, Thundersports, Griffiths Haig Trophy, Aurora Trophy/Classic F3, Historic FF1600, Classic FF1600, Guards Trophy, Historic Road Sports/'70s Road Sports/Historic Touring Cars, Swinging 60s, Classic K **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1320hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1100hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £17 **Web** silverstone.co.uk Tickets online only

■ **Brands Hatch GP, Kent**
Masters Festival: Racing Legends, GT Trophy, Gentleman Drivers, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Sports Car Legends, Endurance Legends, Gerry Marshall Trophy **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1340hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1045hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £28, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0344 225 4422

■ **Snetterton 300, Norfolk**
BRSCC meeting: FF1600, Mazda MX-5, Audi TT, Fun Cup, BMW Compact, Clubsport, BMW 1 Series, Renault Cup, Evolution Trophy, Classic VW, MG Metro **Starts** Saturday, racing from tba (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from tba (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0344 225 4422

RALLYING
SATURDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Jim Clark Rally**
Jim Clark Memorial Motor Club (spectators admitted) **Web** jimclarkrally.co.uk

SUNDAY

■ **Jim Clark Reivers Rally**
Jim Clark Memorial Motor Club (spectators admitted) **Web** jimclarkrally.co.uk

■ **Cavan Stages (IRL)**
Co Cavan Motor Club (spectators admitted) **Web** cavanmotorclub.com

SPORTING SCENE
SATURDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Gurston Down, Salisbury**
British Hillclimb Championship
Starts 0900hrs (both days) **Admission** adults £15 (both days) under 14s go free **Web** gurstondown.org

MONDAY

■ **Hednesford Hills, Staffs**
National Hot Rods
Starts 1300hrs
Admission adults £20, concessions £18, children 5-14 years £8 **Web** spedeworth.co.uk

Details correct at time of going to press, please check with organisers before travelling

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Ian Forshaw's all-action photograph from the recent Compbrake Rally Stages

Silverstone GB3 action, from Dan Lowson

Garry Isherwood was at Brands Hatch

Historic Formula 1, from Jamie Pinchbeck

An NSX tackles Brands Hatch, by Gary Hill

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We report from the second round of the British Rally Championship

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